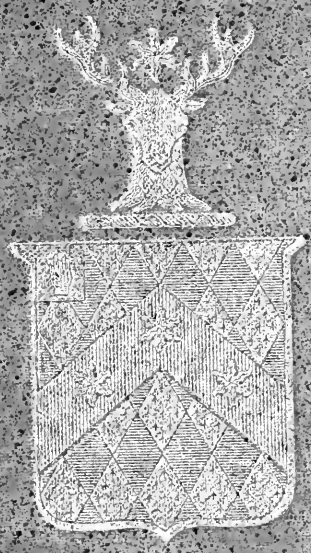
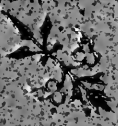


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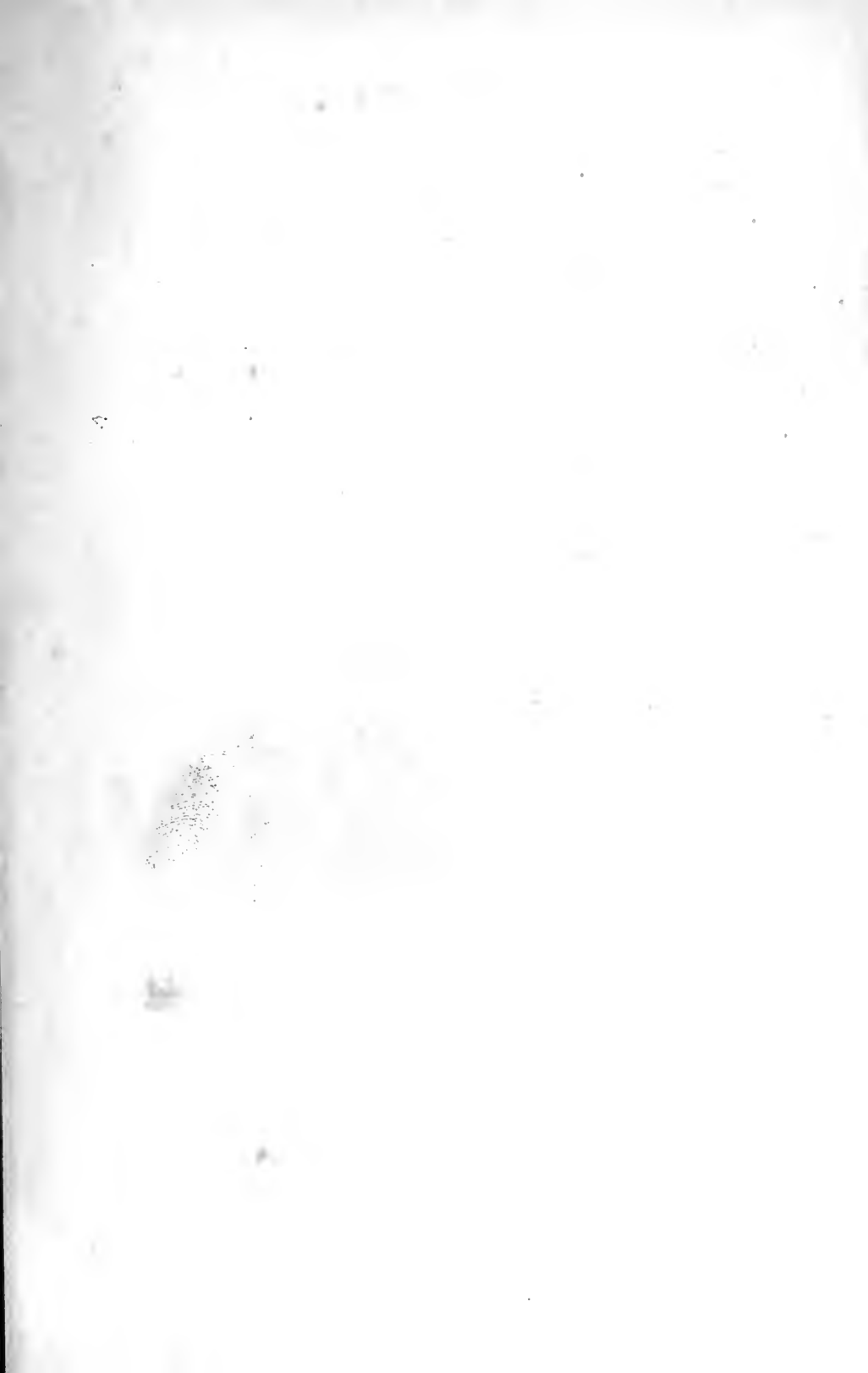
WRAXALL'S  
HISTORICAL AND POSTHUMOUS  
MEMOIRS.



VOL. III.

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THE  
HISTORICAL AND THE POSTHUMOUS



emoirs

OF

Sir Nathaniel William Wrayall

1772—1784

*EDITED, WITH NOTES AND ADDITIONAL CHAPTERS  
FROM THE AUTHOR'S UNPUBLISHED MS.*

BY

HENRY B. WHEATLEY, F.S.A.

*WITH NUMEROUS PORTRAITS*

*IN FIVE VOLUMES*

VOL. III.

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HISTORICAL MEMOIRS  
OF  
MY OWN TIME.

—o—

PART THE THIRD. 1783.

(Continued.)



HE delegates were not the only adversaries with whom Lord North had to contend when defending the constitution. Burke, who ten years later drew forth his powerful artillery in defence of monarchy, lent himself too much at this period of his political life, it must reluctantly be owned, to the machinations of party. Many of his parliamentary speeches between 1779 and 1782 breathe the spirit of faction, blended with intemperance of language sometimes descending to invective. Even Dunning, though brought up to the bar, and possessed of an ample fortune acquired by his profession, yet levelled a vital blow at the constitution of

his country when, on the 24th of April 1780, he moved in the House of Commons "not to dissolve Parliament or to prorogue the session till proper measures should be adopted for diminishing the influence of the crown, and correcting the other evils complained of in the petitions." Algernon Sydney or General Ludlow, two of the most determined republicans of the seventeenth century, could not have made a proposition more subversive in its results of monarchical government. It is obvious that if such a resolution had passed, the King would have stood in the situation of Charles I. in 1641, as the Parliament would have been placed in the very position of the House of Commons at that awful period of our history. Happily Dunning's motion was rejected by a majority of fifty-one votes in a very full House. Fox, irritated to the most violent degree at the subversion of his hopes to drive Lord North from power, attributed his disappointment to the operation of Ministerial corruption among the members who voted on the occasion. It unquestionably resulted, however, from the alarm excited among the moderate independent part of the assembly, who desired, indeed, to limit and to reform, but not to annihilate the power of the crown. No man can doubt that, if the prerogative of prorogation and of dissolution had been taken from the sovereign till every alleged grievance had been redressed, the constitution must have been from that moment subverted, and a renewal of the calamities of Charles I.'s reign must almost inevitably have followed. To Lord North, therefore, sustained by the King's firmness of character, we owe our preservation from all the evils of a republican, if not of a revolutionary form of government. Since 1688 down to the year 1792, when we were menaced with the still greater horrors of French fraternisation, it may be safely

asserted that the British constitution never incurred so imminent a danger of subversion as in 1780.

To Pitt we are indebted for the second leading cause or principle of our resuscitation and recovery after losing America. His institution of the sinking fund of a million sterling in the spring of 1786, by its beneficial operation at that time on the public mind, on our national credit, commerce, and finances, might be said to revivify the state. The third source of our prosperity came from the East, where, without a metaphor, the sun of Britain rose as it set in the west. Since 1783, our acquisitions and possessions in that portion of the globe have been perpetually in a state of progression. All our losses sustained on the Delaware and on the Chesapeake have been more than compensated by our conquests on the Ganges or on the coasts of Coromandel and Malabar. The augmentations of territory in Oude, as well as in Corah and Döoab, including Delhi itself, the metropolis of the Mogul princes, the seizure of the Carnatic, the dissolution of the Mysore monarchy in the person of Tippoo Sultan, the reduction of Ceylon, of the Cape of Good Hope, and of the island of Mauritius, not to mention many inferior objects of attention; these prodigious accumulations of commerce, power, and wealth have obliterated almost the recollections of the American struggle, and have closed all the wounds caused by that unfortunate war. An annual revenue of more than fifteen millions sterling raised in India, payable not in paper but in specie, together with the trade of the East continually poured into our harbours, have enabled us, after contending for nearly twenty years with the power of France, successively wielded by Robespierre and by Buonaparte, to terminate the conflict in the most triumphant manner. I return to the progress of public affairs.

However readily I admit that the treaty of 1783 may be entitled to national approval, yet the members of that Administration at the head of which Lord North had so long presided might nevertheless be fully justified in severely arraigning a peace which relinquished to America almost every point or object for the maintenance of which they had contended from 1775 down to 1782. They might justly feel indignant at the dereliction of the Loyalists,<sup>1</sup> at the evacuation of New York and of Charlestown, together with the sacrifice of immense tracts of territory, extending through nearly twenty degrees of latitude and as many of longitude, including Indian nations our allies, and containing incalculable commercial advantages. When Lord Sackville and Lord Stormont in the House of Peers compared such a treaty with past periods of our history, when they accused the Ministry of doing acts more culpable than even Lord Oxford and Lord Bolingbroke had committed at Utrecht, they might at least be considered as speaking with consistency and in conformity to their avowed principles. But I own that it seems more difficult to conceive and to explain upon what ground Fox could justly reprobate such preliminaries. He had loudly and repeatedly declaimed, through successive years, on the indispensable necessity of obtaining almost any peace, however comparatively bad it might be, as imperiously demanded by the fallen condition of Great Britain.

I perfectly remember, as early as the beginning of the month of March 1781, when, during a debate relative to the loan concluded by Lord North, the prospect of peace being incidentally mentioned as a

<sup>1</sup> "Besides the perpetual annuity of £4000 to the Penns, sums to the amount of £4,300,000 have been given to the Loyalists."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xiii. p. 211.

probable event, Fox eagerly seized the occasion to declare that "he was ready to support almost any terms that the enemy would offer for a general peace, meaning thereby to include France, Spain, and Holland, as well as America." He added that "while the national concerns were conducted by the Ministers of that period no peace could be bad." Yet he declaimed, if possible, with more vehemence and asperity against the Earl of Shelburne than he had done against Lord North; he who, considering the Americans as originally justified in resisting the mother country, had often undertaken their defence in the House of Commons, while he always stigmatised the Loyalists with every opprobrious or contemptuous epithet; he whom I had myself heard declare from the same side of the House not twelve months before, on the fifth day of March 1782, that "whenever he should enter into any terms with an individual of Lord North's Cabinet he would rest satisfied to be called the most infamous of mankind;" adding that "he never could nourish the idea of coalescing with Ministers who had proved themselves devoid of honour and honesty, as in the hands of such men he would not intrust for a moment his own honour." In order to varnish over, therefore, so complete a change of language, sentiments, and system, required all those talents, that bold eloquence, and disregard of, or superiority to, public opinion which met in him. I never indeed regarded him as animated by any other motives in his opposition to the peace of 1783 than ambition and desire of power. Personally odious to the King, as he well knew himself to be on account of his private irregularities, not less than from the line of political action which he had embraced during many years, he beheld no mode or chance of speedily entering the Cabinet except by uniting at once with Lord North. Those persons

who think that abilities such as his ought not to have been lost to his country or excluded from the councils of the crown will, however, see cause probably to justify in some degree his sacrifice of political principle to an overruling necessity. But it became apparent by the events that soon followed the Coalition of 1783 how different a sentence the majority of the nation passed on that memorable union. The people beheld in it a complete renunciation of every object for which Fox had affected to contend, and they regarded, not merely with indifference, but with satisfaction his subsequent expulsion from office.

Lord North's junction with the party which had so long opposed him has always appeared to me to admit of much more palliation in every point of view than the conduct of Fox and his adherents. The former nobleman, by no means in very affluent circumstances, encumbered with a numerous family, saw himself proscribed and excluded from the Cabinet for having unsuccessfully maintained the prerogative of the crown and the supremacy of Parliament against the American insurgents. In this situation, unprotected by the sovereign, who was unable to extend any assistance to him, and unpopular with the nation because he had been unsuccessful, Fox opened his arms and offered him an alliance. Was he bound to reject it and thus pass a sentence of political exclusion on himself? But even if he had so done, worse evils presented themselves in prospect. A union between Fox and Pitt, if it had taken place, would have eventually produced in all probability his own impeachment and that of other members of his Cabinet. Nor could he have found any effectual security from such a prosecution either in the royal authority, in the adherence of the House of Commons, or in the affection of the country. He might have been

made the victim and the sacrifice for the loss of empire, for the disgraces, defeats, capitulations, and ruinous expenditure, of an unfortunate war. Fox and Burke had a hundred times menaced him with the block. Pitt, who, it was evident, entertained similar opinions respecting his Administration, did not at all conceal them.

Powis, when declaiming against the Coalition recently made between Lord North and Fox, on the 21st of February observed, that "to the ill-timed lenity of Lord Shelburne's Administration it could alone be imputed that the noble Lord in the blue ribband enjoyed his present situation of impunity; for if those inquiries which had once been in contemplation had been carried into effect, the House of Commons would not have witnessed on the present occasion the extraordinary and unnatural alliance formed against Ministers." Sir Edward Astley, one of the representatives for the county of Norfolk, who, though a man of no shining ability, justly excited respect as an upright country gentleman, expressed similar opinions on the same night. So did other members of the House upon various occasions. Sir Charles Turner in his homely Yorkshire dialect exclaimed, "The noble Lord in the blue ribband is the author of all our misfortunes. If he and his colleagues had been impeached, as it was the duty of this House to have done, other Ministers would have been deterred from treading in their steps. But now they see that delinquency forms the highroad to preferment, and if any man of talents within these walls will sell his conscience, I will ensure him a peerage. The commission of political crimes leads infallibly to titles, pensions, and ribbands." By accepting the overtures of the Rockingham party, Lord North therefore at least secured his personal safety, and opened to himself

an avenue to the resumption of power. It was not, as I have always thought, the act of uniting with Fox that in itself disgraced him, but the too ready subserviency with which he afterwards lent himself to every measure which that enterprising and ambitious statesman, having again forced his way into the Cabinet, thought it necessary to adopt in order to maintain himself in a situation which he had attained in contradiction to the wishes of his sovereign.

[21st February 1783.] The victory obtained by the new Coalition over Ministers in the House of Commons, however flattering it might be to their hopes, yet being by no means decisive, and the peace having been approved in the Upper House, though only by a small majority of thirteen, in order to compel Lord Shelburne's resignation it became necessary to express in more affirmative language a parliamentary disapprobation of the preliminaries. For this purpose, four days after the first debate, a second discussion took place, when a motion or resolution to the effect above mentioned was brought forward, Lord John Cavendish lending himself again to introduce the business.<sup>1</sup> It was indeed a service of some danger and delicacy, requiring all the reputation which that nobleman enjoyed for political rectitude to protect his friends from the imputations excited by the recent Coalition. Mr. Secretary

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Cavendish was a younger son of the third Duke of Devonshire. His tutor at Cambridge was Mason the poet, who addressed him on leaving the university in the lines beginning—

“Ere yet, ingenuous youth, thy steps retire.”

Walpole did not like him, and therefore sneered at his powers. He wrote : “Under the appearance of virgin modesty he had a confidence in himself that nothing could equal, and a thirst of dominion still more extraordinary. . . . His fair little person, and the quaintness with which he treasured, as if by rote, the stores of his memory, occasioned George Selwyn to call him the learned canary-bird.”—ED.



Townshend, in the course of the debate that ensued, paid many compliments to Lord John's candour and honesty of intention at the expense of his understanding, or rather of his firmness of character. "I have," observed he, "the most implicit reliance on the integrity and honour of that noble person who, from the dictates of his own generous mind, would not act uncandidly by any Administration, but he may be led aside in consequence of the respect which he entertains for others, who know how to choose their man whenever they want any business to be effected which is not evidently right in itself. I am perfectly convinced that my noble friend is not the author of the resolutions that he has proposed, and if Ministers were to be judged by his head and heart, I should not fear to make the treaties just concluded appear to him a real blessing to this country." Lord John endeavoured to justify the Coalition, against the severe animadversions of Powis, and of other members who had generally voted with the Rockingham party, by comparing Fox's union with Lord North to the Administration formed in June 1757, when the first Mr. Pitt coalesced with the Duke of Newcastle, whom he had during many years opposed and reprobated. But however analogous in many respects that transaction might be, yet it certainly failed in carrying the moral conviction to the minds of his hearers which Lord John aspired to produce by his comparison.

The peace was again attacked and defended on its own proper merits at great length, with equal ingenuity, asperity, and profound knowledge of the subject. Fox's speech, though it displayed admirable ability as well as prodigious information, embracing all the great interests and possessions of the empire, commercial or political, in its range, yet

wanted, as I thought, that triumphant spirit which commonly animated and characterised his eloquence. He no doubt anticipated the event of the evening as almost certain, and consequently beheld before him the way open into the Cabinet. But he had sacrificed, if not public principle, at least public opinion, to gratify his ambition. When he looked round him, many vacancies were visible on the Opposition benches, where, in place of his former friends, he now saw only the adherents of Lord North, so lately his bitterest adversaries. He was unquestionably sensible to the circumstance, and he laboured hard to erase the unfavourable impression, which, he well knew, his junction with a nobleman whom he had so lately reprobated must excite in every mind divested of party feelings. "I believe," said he, "that there is scarcely an individual within these walls who would give to the present First Minister his free and spontaneous support. Has he not made, in every quarter of the globe, concessions the most important, without even a pretence of any equivalent? Then let not my coalition with the noble Lord near me, be considered as resulting in any degree from the *res angustæ domi*. Such a motive never can influence men of integrity. Nor let it be asserted that such a junction against a Minister is unconstitutional. For while we admit in the most extended sense the King's prerogative of Ministerial appointment, the people can by their privilege annul the nomination. It is only a Coalition that can repair the decayed system of Administration, and give it the tone of vigorous exertion. By it we shall regain the lost confidence of the nation and give effect to the springs of Government. The obnoxious part of the Cabinet must recede from the presence of the sovereign. He possesses neither the sanction of the people nor of Parlia-

ment." Such was Fox's language on that memorable night.

Those who heard Mr. Pitt<sup>1</sup> address the House on the same evening cannot easily forget the impression made upon his audience by a speech which might be said to unite all the powers of argument, eloquence, and impassioned declamation. He seemed to fight, indeed, as the first Cæsar did at Munda, not merely for empire or for power, but for life. After defending, article by article, the treaties concluded, he finished by deprecating "the ill-omened and baneful alliance" which had just taken place between Lord North and Fox, as teeming with pernicious effects of every kind to the country. Then reverting to the consequences which it might produce personally to himself, he professed his readiness to retire to a private station without regret. Alluding to so material an impending change in his own condition, he exclaimed—

"Fortuna sævo læta negotio, et  
Ludum insolentem ludere pertinax,  
Transmutat incertos honores,  
Nunc mihi, nunc alii benigna.  
Laudo manentem: si celeres quatit  
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit." . . .

With a presence of mind which never forsook him, he here paused, and, conscious that the words of the Roman poet immediately following, "Et mea virtute me involvo," might seem to imply a higher idea of his own merit or disinterestedness than it would become him to avow, he cast his eyes on the floor. A moment or two of silence elapsed, while all attention was directed towards him from every quarter of the House. During this interval, he

<sup>1</sup> He was so ill on this evening that, according to Wilberforce, "he was actually holding Solomon's Porch (a portico behind the Speaker's chair) open with one hand, while vomiting during Mr. Fox's speech." —D.

slowly drew his handkerchief from his pocket, passed it once or twice across his lips, and then recovering as it were from his temporary embarrassment, he added with emphasis, striking his hand on the table—

“—— probamque  
Pauperiem sine dote quæro.”

Perhaps a more masterly and beautiful piece of oratorical acting is not to be found in antiquity. Even if we suppose the whole passage to have been studied and prepared, yet the delicacy of the omission is not less admirable. I believe, however, that the lines which he cited and the one which he suppressed were all equally suggested to him by his feelings and his judgment at the time. Its effect on that part of the House which perfectly understood it corresponded to its merit. But Pitt, who well knew how large a part of his audience, especially among the country gentlemen, were little conversant in the writings of the Augustan age or familiar with Horace, always displayed great caution in borrowing from those classic sources.<sup>1</sup> In the lapse of nearly fourteen years that I have heard him almost daily address the House of Commons, I question if he made in all more than eight or ten citations. Fox and Sheridan, though not equally severe in that respect, yet never abused or injudiciously expended the stores of ancient literature that they possessed. Burke's enthusiasm, his exhaustless memory, and luxuriant imagination, more frequently carried him away into the times of Virgil and Cicero,<sup>2</sup> while Barré usually condescended, whenever he quoted Latin, to translate for the benefit of the county members.

<sup>1</sup> This opinion is generally corroborated. Pitt's quotations were few, but most happy.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson said, “Burke talks from the fulness of his mind.”—ED.

I have already said that the Chancellor of the Exchequer excited admiration by his speech in defence of the peace. There was indeed throughout the whole of that most eloquent address a pathos, an emotion, and an animation, of which, even in him, I hardly ever witnessed any similar exhibition while I sat in Parliament. If Lord Shelburne's Ministry could have been propped or preserved, it must have been upheld by such a man and by such exertions. Over Fox and Lord North Pitt seemed to assume a moral superiority, and, if I may so express myself, to look down upon them from the eminence on which he stood—not the eminence of power or of office, but of conscious rectitude untainted with party spirit, and disdaining to sacrifice principle for place, while he beheld them floundering in the mire of ambition. Addressing himself to Fox at the commencement of his speech: "The triumphs of party," exclaimed he, "with which the right honourable gentleman seems so highly elate shall never seduce me to commit any act which even suspicion can condemn. I will never engage in political enmities without a public cause. I never will forego such enmities without the public approbation. Nor will I ever be questioned and cast off in the face of this assembly by one virtuous and dissatisfied friend. These, the permanent triumphs of reason and principle over the profligate inconsistencies of party violence; these, the triumphs of virtue over success itself, shall not only be mine on the present occasion, but throughout every future condition of my life."

The Coalition, though supported by superiority of numbers and conducted by extraordinary talents as well as energies, shrunk, as I thought, under the castigation thus inflicted, to which Fox made no reply. After having depicted in a masterly man-

ner, not less lucid and distinct though less verbose than Fox's, the fallen state of the British Empire and of its resources at the beginning of 1783, he alluded with surprising delicacy and beauty to its widely different position in 1763, when the great Earl of Chatham, his father, had placed it on the summit of national glory. "Could his Majesty's present Ministers," said he, "thus surrounded as we are with scenes of calamity, attempt to dictate terms of pacification to the confederate powers? Even the Dutch had not been disarmed or conciliated by the humiliating language of the late Foreign Secretary. Should we have persevered from day to day in throwing the desperate die? Can the articles of peace now accepted suffer any serious comparison with the Treaty of Paris? There was indeed a time when this country might have dictated conditions to her enemies. And if an imagination, warmed with the power and prosperity of Great Britain, could have diverted any member of the present Cabinet from a painful perception of the truth, I may, I hope without presumption, have been entitled to that indulgence. I well recollect how much my childhood was animated by the recital of England's victories. I was instructed by one whose memory I must ever cherish and revere that at the termination of a contest widely different from the present we had prescribed the terms of peace to submissive nations. This was the era of our splendour, in contemplating which I may be allowed to feel a more than common interest. But that era is fled. We are now under the mortifying necessity of adopting a tone and language corresponding with our altered condition. All the visions of our power and pre-eminence have passed away."

Noble and affecting as was this picture, drawn by such a hand and on such an occasion, I am not

sure whether it was not outdone by other passages in the course of the same evening. His two portraits of Lord Shelburne and of Lord North, though I may not altogether admit their truth in every particular, were masterpieces of talent. "From the complexion of this evening's debate," observed Pitt, "it appears obvious that the motions originate rather in the desire of driving the Earl of Shelburne from the Treasury than in any conviction that Ministers merit censure for the concessions made in order to obtain peace; concessions arising from an insurmountable necessity, and imputable solely to the Cabinet of which the noble Lord in the blue ribband was the head. The Minister who now presides in the councils of the crown, like every other individual eminent for ability and placed in high office, becomes naturally an object of envy. The obloquy to which his capacity and his elevation subject him has been created and circulated with equal meanness and address, but his merits are as much above my encomiums as the arts to which he owes his defamation are beneath my notice. When, bereft of power, he descends into life without the invidious appendages of place, mankind will view him through a different medium, and perceive in him qualities richly entitling him to their esteem."—"My particular share of the censure pointed against Ministers I will support with fortitude, because I have not acted wrong. My own heart, a monitor which never yet did, and I trust never will, deceive me, constitutes my asylum against clamour and faction. I felt no extraordinary eagerness to come in, and I shall experience no reluctance to go out, whenever the public may think proper to dismiss me from their service."—"I repeat, that whatever may appear humiliating or inadequate in the treaties now

laid upon the table is exclusively and wholly chargeable to the noble Lord in the blue ribband. His profusion of the public money, his notorious temerity and pertinacity in prosecuting the war for reducing America to submission, a contest which originated in his pernicious and oppressive policy, when added to his utter inability for filling the station which he occupied, these circumstances have rendered peace almost of any description indispensable for the extrication of the state." I will fairly confess, that though I voted against Ministers on that night, yet Mr. Pitt never appeared in my eyes an object of more just admiration than when on the point of laying down his power. Such I believe to have been the sentiment universally felt, not less by his opponents than by his supporters.

While, however, I do him this justice, I cannot pass over in silence the part which Lord North performed on an occasion which demanded all his exertions. He rose soon after Pitt concluded, and rarely have I witnessed, even from him, an exhibition of greater talent. "The last speaker," observed he, "whose amazing eloquence has so deeply impressed and affected every person in this audience, does me the honour to select me as the object of his thunder. And it constitutes no slender presumption of my innocence that I have heard him thunder without experiencing any dismay. I have even listened to his thunder with equal astonishment and delight. But I call on him, and on every individual who hears me, to attest my declaration, that I have never abandoned in a single instance my character, my connections, or my political principles. I have been and I am ready to meet without subterfuge or evasion the most scrupulous inquiry into every action of my life. I am ready, even at this instant, to stand forth and to bid defi-



ance to every species of investigation. Conscious of my rectitude of intention, I labour under no apprehension either of incurring censure or of deserving punishment." Then alluding to his junction with Fox, after having spoken of his abilities in terms of the warmest panegyric, Lord North added, "It is true that during my Administration, when I was vilified and abused, as every unfortunate Minister must be, he often ran me hard and made me the object of his severe animadversion. But however deficient in capacity may have been my official conduct, I trust it will be admitted that I never wanted zeal to promote the true interests of my country, according to my conception of them. And notwithstanding the asperity with which he frequently treated me, as well as my measures, I do not recollect his ever charging me with the direct want of integrity. I know his temper to be warm, but he is of a generous nature, open, sincere, and manly. While I admire the vast extent of his mind, I can rely with security on the goodness of his heart. And our principles, which were adverse, being now congenial, we shall unite all our energies in the cause of Great Britain." We must admit that a more eloquent and able defence of the Coalition could not have been pronounced. The public, nevertheless, viewed it through other optics, and considered it as a mutual sacrifice of political principle.

A minority of seventeen, in which the Ministry remained at the close of the debate, which took place at a very late hour and in a very crowded House of Commons, where near 400 members voted, seemed to secure the triumph of the Coalition.<sup>1</sup> Yet, as no direct censure had hitherto been

<sup>1</sup> "On the day," says Bishop Watson, "in which the peace was to be debated in the two Houses of Parliament, I happened to stand next to him (Lord Shelburne), and asked him whether he was to be turned

passed upon the Administration, and as the condemnation expressed relative to the peace was couched in very moderate terms, simply stating that "the concessions made were greater than our adversaries were entitled to demand," it did not by any means follow that a change in the Government would take place. Lord North himself had sufficiently demonstrated, during the two sessions of 1779 and 1780, how little effect a majority had in compelling him to retire from office; and the political, if not moral disapprobation felt at the recent junction of two men who had so long condemned and reprobated each other, pervaded to a certain degree all ranks. Of this mortifying fact Fox very early received the most unequivocal proofs. Powis had commented on it with great acrimony. Sir Cecil Wray, Fox's colleague for Westminster, rising in his place during the debate which we have just reviewed, exclaimed, "I am told that a Coalition has taken place with that Ministry to whose maladministration is alone imputable the distressed condition of the country, which renders necessary the present peace. What opinion may be entertained by other gentlemen, I know not; but for my own part, I solemnly declare I never will support an Administration so composed, nor any Administration of which Lord North forms a part." Duncombe, one of the two representatives for the county of York, expressed himself, if possible, in stronger language only three days after the debate of the 21st of February. Having presented a petition to the House from near ten thousand freeholders of Yorkshire demanding a more equal re-

out by the disapprobation of the Commons. He replied that he could not certainly tell what would be the temper of that House, but he could say that he had not expended a shilling of the public money to procure its approbation, though he well knew that above £60,000 had been expended in procuring an approbation of the peace in 1763."—*Life of Bishop of Landaff*, 1818, vol. i. p. 169.

presentation in Parliament, he took occasion to say that "it would be with reluctance he should support any Administration of which Lord North was a member." Burke, no doubt thinking to efface the impression, instantly stood up, and remarked with some asperity, that "as to parliamentary support, it ought neither to be given nor to be withheld on account of men, but of measures." Adding, "The honourable gentleman appears to be of a different sentiment, as he informs us he will consider men and not measures." Duncombe, however, not intimidated by the correction, observed, that "he might have expressed himself incorrectly in making use of the term reluctance." "I will, therefore," continued he, "amend it, and declare that I never will lend my support to such an Administration. In thus speaking of the noble Lord, I wish to have it understood that I have in view the measures as well as the man, for from his past measures I appreciate the man."

Walter Stanhope, then member for Hull, retorted on Burke for his versatility. "I own it astonishes me," said he, "to find that the noble Lord's defender is the very person who has more than once declared him a fit object of impeachment; nay, who went so far as to assert in this House that he had an impeachment ready drawn in his pocket." Such were the humiliating reflections or animadversions to which the Coalition gave rise among men most attached to Fox and to the Rockingham party. Mr. Hill, who represented Shropshire, and who was afterwards better known in the annals of Parliament as Sir Richard, accustomed frequently to borrow his allusions from holy writ, compared the junction of Lord North and his new associate to the union between Herod and Pontius Pilate. Even Sir Charles Turner, a man devoted to Fox, and who

so implicitly adopted all his political opinions as in general to retain none of his own, yet recoiled at the union, of which he expressed himself when addressing the House in that plain, unadorned, but emphatic style natural to him. "The Coalition," exclaimed he, "has astonished the whole nation, and no individual more than myself. I am sorry for it, as my worthy friend Charles has materially injured himself by it. He has lost much of his popularity. The noble Lord with whom he has coalesced is undoubtedly the best of men considered as a private character, but as a Minister he has been most unfortunate. I reprobate therefore the alliance between them. It will turn out ill, and never answer the expectations of its authors." Even the very majority which had disapproved of the treaties as inadequate to the just expectations of the nation, yet might not follow up their late vote by any personal attack on Ministers, or, if they did, might fail to carry the House with them. And in that event, the Coalition would remain seated as before on the Opposition bench, without deriving any benefit from their late success. A First Lord of the Treasury who, to conscious integrity joined fortitude and resources of character, seemed exempt from any necessity of resigning on account of the danger of impeachment, might still by protracting the struggle terminate it advantageously to himself. Such were the opinions at that time generally entertained, and the expectations formed both in and out of Parliament.

[22d—28th February 1783.] But all these political speculations were suddenly overturned by Lord Shelburne's immediate resignation. Without waiting for any broader hint or trying by any exertions to perpetuate his possession of power, he retired from office, as so many of his predecessors

had done during the present reign. There has always appeared to be something mysterious or unexplained in the motives which impelled him thus precipitately, if not prematurely, to abandon a situation which he had attained with so much labour as well as address, and from which he can scarcely be said to have been driven. So singular a fact was variously explained or interpreted at the time. As even his opponents neither attributed to him want of ambition nor any defect of firmness, it became requisite to discover and to assign other reasons for his conduct. Reports injurious to his political reputation were industriously disseminated by his enemies, which, from the systematic hostility exhibited in their diffusion, I believe to have been without foundation. Pitt himself may indeed be said to have involuntarily given some weight to them by his own line of conduct towards Lord Shelburne; for though scarcely ten months elapsed before Pitt came again into power, yet he never associated that nobleman to any share of it, nor ever offered to give him a place in the Cabinet as Lord President or as Lord Privy Seal. So pointed an exclusion of the man who had first called him up to the councils of the sovereign and placed him there as Chancellor of the Exchequer at three-and-twenty is not easily explained. It is true that Pitt pronounced, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, from the Treasury bench, the highest encomiums on his principal during the course of the discussions that took place relative to the peace. In his memorable speech of the 21st of February, he even alluded, as we have seen, with indignant warmth to the "arts of defamation" which Lord Shelburne's enemies adopted for the purpose of degrading him in the national estimation—arts of which Pitt professed his scorn as well as his conviction of their false-

hood. But his actions seem to have contradicted his professions.

I have, however, been assured that Pitt, when he was made First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in December 1783, did offer Lord Shelburne a seat in the Cabinet, a proposition which was declined by the latter, as he conceived it impossible for Pitt to maintain himself in office against a decided majority in the House of Commons. When Pitt had ultimately surmounted all opposition and was become established in power, he therefore did not esteem it necessary to reiterate the offer. Lord Shelburne, offended at his exclusion from any place in Administration, complained of it to the King, adding that "he who had first introduced Mr. Pitt into the Cabinet found himself now neglected by his former *élève*." But his Majesty replied, "My Lord, I believe Mr. Pitt was the only man who could have aided you so essentially as he did on your being placed at the head of the Treasury after the Marquis of Rockingham's decease." I have reason to think that this anecdote is correct and well founded. That towards the end of 1784 Pitt advised his Majesty to raise Lord Shelburne to the rank of a British Marquis must be admitted; but that title was understood to be given (like the Earldom of Lonsdale, conferred by Pitt on Sir James Lowther earlier in the same year) as payment in full from the First Minister for all past obligations or services.<sup>1</sup> Lord Shelburne, after his resignation, seemed in fact to be regarded as politically extinct, though still in the full enjoyment of all his faculties of body and mind, nor at all supposed to want am-

<sup>1</sup> "The Marquisate was not conferred on Lord Shelburne at the suggestion of Mr. Pitt. The Duke of Rutland, on accepting the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland, requested and obtained that mark of distinction for Lord Shelburne direct from the King."—*Edinburgh Review*, xxv. 213.—ED.

bition. The Marquis of Lansdowne, as a peer of Parliament, sometimes took a part the most conspicuous in the debates of the Upper House, but he never openly aspired again to become First Lord of the Treasury, nor even to enter the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

[1st—6th March 1783.] Throughout the whole proceedings of the Ministerial change that took place at this time there was something personal which attached exclusively to himself. He resigned almost immediately after the second debate, of which I have spoken, but the Administration was by no means on that account at an end. Pitt, far from following his example, remained in office more than five weeks as Chancellor of the Exchequer after the First Lord of the Treasury had retired, a circumstance unprecedented in our history. Nor can there be any doubt that he might have retained his situation under the Coalition if he would have submitted to sit in Cabinet and to act with Lord North, but his principles were too inflexible to accommodate themselves to circumstances. Lord John Cavendish, far from forming any obstacle, would have lent every facility to Pitt's continuance at the head of the Exchequer. Fox himself, in the course of his speech on the 21st of February, expressly stated the fact. "Can my noble friend," said he, "who brings forward the present resolution be considered as a man ambitious of power? He who has always been known rather to avoid than to court official employment? If he has any blemish to set off his eminent virtues, it is that of receding from those places where his ability and integrity might render essential service to his country." Throughout the two debates in the Lower

<sup>1</sup> Lord Lansdowne for many years was the only nobleman who did the "honours of the kingdom," and at his table were to be seen all distinguished foreigners and literary characters.—ED.

House of Parliament on the peace, Lord Shelburne formed, if not the exclusive, yet the principal object of attack. Even those members who most severely reprobated the junction of Lord North and Fox expressed the greatest indifference on the subject of the First Lord of the Treasury and his tenure of power. "As to the present Premier," said Sir Cecil Wray, "I know little of him, and various reasons induce me to wish him out of office, but not for having concluded the treaties on the table." Powis, speaking on the same subject on the night of the 21st, observed that "if the removal of the First Minister constituted the principal object of the motion, he considered it as already sufficiently decided." "The division," added he, "on the former agitation of the present question four days ago, may have given a pretty broad hint to the noble Lord that he is by no means so popular as he had imagined."

Powis's language on the 6th of March, when alluding to the state of Ministerial affairs, was still more pointed. "The Administration," remarked Powis, "has been for some time burning in the socket, and has at last become extinct. But perhaps in one point of view this is no national misfortune, for when I reflect who is at the head of the Ministry, I may say it would be better to have no head at all." Widely different were his expressions relative to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. "In the dissolution of the present Cabinet," continued he, "there is, however, one circumstance deeply to be regretted—I mean the loss which the public will sustain by the retreat from office of a gentleman whose splendid abilities may adorn any situation. It is to be hoped that he will not remain long unemployed. Great talents are public property, and therefore the public ought not to be deprived of



them." An extraordinary and anomalous interval of time followed Lord Shelburne's resignation, during which the functions of Government may be said to have suffered a suspension, while the King, the Ministry, and the candidates for power stood looking at each other. William III. never displayed more steadiness or determination at any period of his life, either when Prince of Orange or after his elevation to the crown of England, than George III. manifested throughout the whole of "this interregnum," as it was denominated. Though his First Minister, from whatever motives, had quitted him, he did not abandon himself or forsake those individuals who remained faithful to him. On the contrary, he made the most desperate efforts to avoid passing under a yoke which he considered as equally painful to himself and pernicious to his people.

The Coalition, having twice defeated Administration in the House of Commons and having compelled Lord Shelburne to retire, considered the business as effected and their triumph secure. Resting, therefore, on their arms, without attempting to push their advantages farther, they waited till the King should send to the two leaders in order to form a new Ministry. But in this expectation, however natural, they greatly deceived themselves. That prince, as if conscious that Lord Shelburne constituted the principal and the most vulnerable object of attack, having disembarrassed his councils of the weight that encumbered them, endeavoured to repair the breach and to form a new rampart against Lord North and Fox. It might perhaps have been imagined that the presence of the former nobleman in Cabinet, and the share of power which must necessarily be allotted to him and his friends in the formation of a new Government, would have tranquillised the King's

mind by affording a security against the attempts or character of the latter statesman. But he knew, by the experience of many years, the pliability and easiness of Lord North's nature, nor was he unacquainted with the energy of Fox's mind, or unapprised of the efforts that he would probably make in order to cement and to perpetuate that elevation which he had now nearly attained with so much difficulty. The King, who considered Fox as a man ruined in fortune, of an incorrect moral conduct, and surrounded with a crowd of followers resembling him in these particulars, deprecated, as the severest misfortune to himself and to his subjects, the necessity of taking such a person, however eminent for capacity, into his confidence or councils. When we consider these circumstances, we shall not wonder at the long, though ineffectual, resistance made by his Majesty before he submitted to receive the law from the Coalition.

[6th March 1783.] Previous to Lord Shelburne's resignation and the dissolution of his Ministry, various pensions having been granted to eminent individuals, particularly one to the Chancellor and a second to Lord Grantham, Powis brought the subject before the House. Pitt stated the circumstances attending these grants officially from the Treasury bench, and a very animated as well as personal discussion arose, in which Fox took a most prominent part. He was peculiarly severe on Lord Thurlow, whom he supposed to form, by his advice to the King, the principal impediment to the formation of a new Administration. "I have long lived," said he, "on terms of sincere private friendship with that noble person, who unquestionably possesses great abilities, but I am nevertheless of opinion that they are exerted in a manner most injurious to the true interests of the country." "We

are told," continued he, "by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that when Lord Grantham accepted the office of Secretary for the Foreign Department, his Majesty promised him a pension of two thousand pounds a year whenever he should leave the office. What can this be denominated except bribing persons by pensions to assume employments for the acceptance of which they betray no inclination? By such expedients the crown may always form an Administration without regarding either the approbation of Parliament or the confidence of the people." Having thus animadverted on one Secretary of State, he turned round upon the other, Townshend, who on that very day had been raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Sydney. "No man," observed Fox, "entertains a higher esteem for him than I do, or more sincerely wishes him loaded with honours. Yet it seems a little extraordinary that the sovereign should think proper to remunerate those Ministers who have assisted in making a peace which the more I contemplate it the more cause of wonder do I find at any Secretary of State having affixed his signature to such treaties." From the absent reverting to those who were present, he next attacked Dundas, who had recently obtained the place of Keeper of the Signet in Scotland. After declaring that he meant nothing invidious or personally offensive, Fox added, "All the world nevertheless wonders at so strange a fact as giving a man an office for life on condition of his taking another, the Treasurership of the Navy, which may be regarded as nearly a sinecure. So absurd as well as lavish a waste of the public money has, I believe, no precedent." Towards the conclusion of his speech he once more fastened upon the Chancellor, "whose injurious influence," Fox declared, "the kingdom felt at the present moment," adding,

"If those pernicious exertions had not been made, I fully believe an Administration would have been formed some days ago which would have united the confidence of this House and the affection of the people."

No sooner had Fox concluded than the Lord Advocate rose, and having explained the circumstances that attended his acceptance of the place of Treasurer of the Navy—a situation which, he candidly admitted, was not one suited to him—he subjoined, "I will not, however, say that I am unfit for the office which I have obtained in Scotland; and as his Majesty has been pleased to honour me with a patent place, I do assure the right honourable gentleman that I never will dishonour the patent by *carrying it to market*." Dundas's allusion, in these last words, to the sale or exchange formerly negotiated by Fox with Mr. Charles Jenkinson, to whom he sold the Clerkship of the Pells in Ireland, was too pointed, as well as personal, to be passed over in silence. Fox instantly replied that the transaction in question had in it nothing dishonourable. "I received," said he, "the patent in question from my father, as a part of my fortune, altogether unconnected with the Ministry of that day, who first applied to me on the subject. I consented to accommodate Government, though on very injurious conditions for myself, as I parted with a thing of considerably greater value than I received in return. This is the whole affair, and no man except the learned Lord ever thought it dishonourable or disgraceful in the slightest degree." Rigby confirmed Fox's statement in the most ample manner. "I was acquainted," observed he, "with every part of the bargain, which was perfectly honourable, and in which there could be only one thing censurable, namely, that the possessor of it gave

away his patent for less than its worth." George Byng added that the place had no sooner passed out of Fox's possession into the hands of Jenkinson, than its value became augmented to the amount of full a thousand pounds a year. Here the matter dropped; but Rigby, having stated in the course of his speech that "though he did not approve of the late Coalition, yet he was ready to support any Administration, whether formed on a broad or on a narrow basis, which might rescue the country from its present deplorable state," Courtenay exposed the declaration to much derision. "I give the worthy gentleman entire credit for his assurance," said he, "and I am persuaded he is animated by no other motive except to preserve peace and unanimity, to maintain the proper equilibrium between the crown and the people; but, above all, to retain down to the last moment possible every balance in his hands."

[*7th—23d March 1783.*] During the course of the month of March, every measure was adopted on the part of the King that promised to frustrate the hopes of the new confederates. Earl Gower,<sup>1</sup> to whom the place just vacated by Lord Shelburne was offered, manifested the utmost readiness to accept it, if the probable means of maintaining himself there could be demonstrated. But by what expedient could a minority of the House of Commons be converted by him at once into a majority? The difficulties being considered as insuperable, the experiment was therefore at length abandoned. Meanwhile the Coalition, indignant at so long a delay, began to manifest symptoms of impatience. The House of Commons having adjourned for some days after the debate of the 21st February, on a mo-

<sup>1</sup> Granville, second Earl Gower, born 4th August 1721. As Lord Trentham, he was member for Westminster in the Parliament of 1747, and for Lichfield in 1754. In the latter year he succeeded to the Earldom, and was created Marquis of Stafford in 1786.—ED.

tion to that purpose made by Dundas, with the view of allowing time for a new Ministerial arrangement, Lord Maitland<sup>1</sup> called on the Lord Advocate to state the reasons why a successor had not been appointed to the Earl of Shelburne. This fact took place on the 28th of February, but no reply being returned to Lord Maitland's inquiry, either by the person to whom the question was addressed, or from any individual seated on the Treasury bench, though Pitt himself was present, the subject proceeded no further. Things remained in this state during more than a fortnight, it being perfectly understood that his Majesty was occupied in unceasing exertions with a view to prop or to re-create the Administration. At length, on the 18th of March, Mr. Coke, member for the county of Norfolk,<sup>2</sup> having given notice that if no Ministry should be formed in the course of two days, he would move an address to the crown on the subject, the King, conceiving it dangerous as well as useless to protract the contest, sent his commands to the Duke of Portland and Lord North to wait upon him at St. James's. I have been assured that at the audience which took place his Majesty offered to concede every point in litigation except one, namely, that Lord Thurlow should not be deprived of the Great Seal. If that nobleman, he said, were permitted to remain in office, he would allow the new Ministers to dispose

<sup>1</sup> James, Lord Maitland, born 26th January 1759, was M.P. for Newport, Cornwall. He succeeded his father as eighth Earl of Lauderdale in 1789, and was created a peer of the United Kingdom in 1806 as Baron Lauderdale. He died 15th September 1839.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Coke of Holkham, "King of Norfolk." He was born in 1748. He supported throughout his parliamentary career every popular measure save one: he opposed the repeal of the Corn Laws. The Prince of Wales used to call him "My brother Whig." He expended above £100,000 in erecting new farmhouses on his estates. In 1775 he married a sister of Lord Sherborne, and about half a century later he married the young Lady Anne Keppel, daughter of the Earl of Albemarle. He died, Earl of Leicester, A.D. 1837.—D.

of all other employments at their pleasure. But no arguments could induce the Coalition to relax upon so essential an article. Fox equally disliked and dreaded the Chancellor, whose intractability, when added to his influence over the royal mind in a place which rendered him the director of his sovereign's conscience, exposed the new candidates for office to perpetual danger. They insisted peremptorily on putting the Great Seal into commission. Their proposition being as firmly rejected by his Majesty, the conference terminated without any progress or beneficial result.

At this critical juncture died the Honourable Dr. Frederick Cornwallis, Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of amiable character, though not distinguished by the eminent virtues of Tillotson or the talents of Laud.<sup>1</sup> The King, who well knew that the Coalition, or, in other words, that Fox had destined that great ecclesiastical elevation for Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, or for Hinchcliffe,<sup>2</sup> Bishop of Peterborough, probably for the former of them, and who was also aware that if he wished to dispose of it himself he had not an hour to lose, immediately sent for Dr. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Countess of Huntingdon was so scandalised by the Sunday parties of Mrs. Cornwallis at Lambeth Palace, that she personally appealed to the King and Queen, and at their remonstrance the parties ceased to be held.—D.

<sup>2</sup> Hinchcliffe was the son of a livery-stable keeper. He married Miss Crewc, whose brother was his pupil, and whom he had been employed to dissuade from marrying a rakish officer. As a preacher, he was famous for pronouncing his consonants, and he was called the "bloody bishop" for his fierceness against the Arminians. At his death in 1794 he was in his sixty-third year. Bishop Shipley, who wrote a poor monody on the death of Queen Caroline, is of less note than his son, Dean Shipley, who in 1784 was tried for publishing a pamphlet said to be a libel. His counsel, Erskine, and his judge, Buller, had sharp contests on the wording of the verdict, by which the jury refused to find that the matter of the pamphlet was libellous. From that time juries were held to be judges of the law as well as of the fact.—D.

<sup>3</sup> Hurd was a respectable farmer's son, and owed his rise in the

That excellent prelate, whose piety and learning rendered him one of the ornaments as well as pillars of the Anglican Church, having waited on his Majesty, was informed by him that the See of Canterbury had become vacant, and that as he knew no person in his opinion more worthy to fill the metropolitan chair, he wished the Bishop to accept it. He added, that in the actual position of public affairs, when he might every day be compelled to take new Ministers into his councils, he hoped that the Bishop would interpose no unnecessary delay. But Dr. Hurd, far from desiring a dignity so much sought after, besought the King to excuse him for declining it, stating that neither his health nor his frame of mind were adequate to the extended duties of the metropolitan See, though equal to fulfilling the more limited functions of his own diocese. His Majesty having, not without great reluctance, yielded to these reasons, then insisted that the Bishop should at least name the person whom he conceived most proper to succeed Dr. Cornwallis. Hurd, without long hesitation, mentioned Dr. Louth, Bishop of London, and a messenger was instantly dispatched to find him at his house in St. James's Square. The Bishop arriving in a very short time, had no sooner entered the closet, than the King made him the same proposition which he had done to Hurd. Extraordinary as it may appear, he met from that prelate with a similar refusal, and one not less sincere, as well as inflexible, than the former. In this unexpected predicament, the King, addressing himself to them both, said, "My Lords, I will not press either of you further, but before you leave this room you

Church to the patronage of Warburton. He was tutor to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York. When he became a Tory, Johnson said, "I fear he is a Whig at heart." He died in 1808, nearly ninety years of age.—D.



must recommend a proper successor to the deceased Archbishop, and whomsoever you shall agree to name, I will accept." The two prelates having requested to be allowed a short time for consulting together, after a few minutes' deliberation, without quitting the royal presence, united in nominating Dr. John Moore, Bishop of Bangor. Being sent for to St. James's, on his arrival, to his no small astonishment, he learned the reasons for which he had been summoned to court. He accepted the preferment, but the requisite forms incident to the *congé d'élire*, and other ceremonies indispensable to the election, prevented the translation from being completed before the second of the following month, the very day on which the King having surrendered at discretion, the Coalition actually took possession of the Government.

Dr. Moore, whom we have beheld during two-and-twenty years Archbishop of Canterbury, and who owed his elevation to that high dignity to the joint recommendations of Hurd and Louth, was a prelate of an irreproachable life, added to a solid understanding. But his first ecclesiastical advance arose from one of those accidents which, whatever Juvenal may have said to the contrary, sometimes seem to determine, no less than merit, the colour of our fate. The Duchess-Dowager of Marlborough (commonly called the Trevor Duchess<sup>1</sup>), after the Duke's decease in 1758, having occasion for a tutor to superintend the education of her youngest son, Lord Robert Spencer, applied to the Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, requesting him to recommend a proper person to her for the purpose. I have been assured that Mr. Moore, then a servitor of that

<sup>1</sup> She was the daughter of Thomas, Lord Trevor, and died in 1761. It was of her husband that Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son in 1753, "He did by no means spend, but he slatterned himself into that immense debt which is not yet near paid off."—D.

college, of very obscure birth and connections, happening to cross the quadrangle at the precise moment of this application, it immediately occurred to the Dean's mind that he would answer the description of the tutor demanded by the Duchess. He hesitated, nevertheless, for some time whether he should make the proposition to Mr. Moore, her Grace having positively insisted on his stipulating, that whatever individual she should receive into her family in quality of preceptor to her son, should not be admitted to dine at her table. The offer, when made by the Dean, was, however, accepted under that exclusion; but so rapid became Mr. Moore's progress in her personal esteem, no less than in her affection, that within a very short time she found herself unable to dine without him. Her preference assumed even so decided a character as to leave him no room to doubt of her inclination, if he had encouraged it, notwithstanding the prodigious disparity of their respective situations in life, to have bestowed her hand on him in marriage. Instead of thus acting, as a man of narrow or selfish views would have done, his sense of honour and delicacy of sentiment led him to communicate the advances made him by the Duchess to her son, the late Duke. Conduct and principles so highly disinterested<sup>1</sup> could not fail ultimately to meet their just reward. By the Duke of Marlborough's interest being promoted in the Church, he became Dean of Canterbury, from which situation he was soon translated to the Bishopric of Bangor, passing through no other intermediate episcopal stage till he attained to the metropolitan dignity. Such an impression,

<sup>1</sup> By no means *disinterested*. He was sure to get preferment from the Duke, and only a life annuity from the Duchess, to whom he, probably, preferred some other woman. It was prudent management of good fortune, but by no means a proof of disinterestedness.—P.

The Archbishop was a handsome man even in old age.—ED.

indeed, had his merit and character produced while he remained at Canterbury, that on his promotion to the See of Bangor, all those persons who came to take leave of him expressed their full conviction of his returning to them again as Archbishop. "We console ourselves, Mr. Dean," said they, "for losing you at present by the confident expectation which we entertain of your speedy restoration to us."<sup>1</sup> I return to the course of public affairs.

On the complete failure of the first attempt, already mentioned, which his Majesty made to form a new Administration, many propositions were suggested to prop and renovate the still existing Ministry, however difficult such a work might justly be esteemed under the actual circumstances. Mr. Pitt, desirous to meet the King's wishes on a point which coincided with all his own objects of personal elevation and ambition, suffered himself to be persuaded to promise that he would accept the post of First Lord of the Treasury in addition to the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and during twenty-four hours he might be said to have in some measure actually held both these offices. But finding it impracticable, after full examination, to set up any Government which promised duration, or which could make head against the Coalition in the House of Commons, he reluctantly retracted his engagement. Reduced almost to despair by so many disappointments, and unable to effect his emancipation, the King unquestionably meditated the extraordinary project of visiting his electoral dominions, and relinquishing for a time to the Coalition the power of which they had forcibly possessed them-

<sup>1</sup> On the decease of Dr. Moore in 1805, Pitt wished his friend Prettyman to succeed him, but the King burst out, "No, no, no; must have a gentleman at Canterbury." Dr. Manners Sutton was translated, whose brother, Lord Manners, was Chancellor of Ireland in 1807, and his son Speaker of the House of Commons in 1822.—ED.

selves. But on communicating his intention to the Chancellor, that Minister, far from encouraging the proposition, gave it his strongest disapprobation. "There is nothing easier, sir," said he, with his characteristic severity of voice and manner, "than to go over to Hanover. It may not, however, prove so easy to return to this country when your Majesty becomes tired of Germany. Recollect the precedent of James II., who precipitately embraced a similar expedient. Your Majesty must not think for a moment of adopting so imprudent and hazardous a step. Time and patience will open a remedy to the present evils." The King, happily for himself, acquiesced in Lord Thurlow's wise and wholesome advice.

[24th March 1783.] While these interesting scenes passed at St. James's, the House of Commons, completely in the hands of the Coalition, proceeded, though with great apparent caution and external testimonies of respect, to press the sovereign by every constitutional means that he would put an end to the interregnum, which Fox denominated, in the strong language familiar to him, "the most insolent domination that ever disgraced a free country." Mr. Coke, after repeated delays, having moved an address to his Majesty entreating him "to form an Administration entitled to the confidence of the people," one of the most interesting conversations, rather than debates, took place, at which I ever assisted, nearly four hundred members being present. It was opened by the member for Norfolk in mild and temperate language; but the Earl of Surrey, who seconded the motion, did not observe equal delicacy or reserve in his expressions, which, as I thought, had always a tincture of democracy. "I admit," said he, "that a high respect is due to the sovereign, but not less respect is due to the people.

It is impossible to go on longer without a Government; and therefore, exceptionable as the present motion may be, I shall support it, because I am convinced if this House does not call for an Administration, the people will demand it in a manner painful to the crown and injurious to the public interests."

Various individuals having inveighed in animated terms against the Coalition, Fox rose in order to justify the measure, and at the same time to state his opinions on the actual condition of the country. "Whatever," observed Fox, "may be his Majesty's private feelings or opinions at the present moment, when all government is suspended, he never can act wrong unless he is ill advised. It becomes, therefore, proper to declare from whom he could receive that injurious advice, and the channel through which it comes cannot be matter of doubt. The nation has now remained near five weeks in a state without precedent, and without ostensible Ministers. If ever there was a time that imperiously demanded the oblivion of former animosities and ancient prejudices, it is the present moment. The situation of the country renders indispensable a coalition of parties, and in order to attain an object so salutary, by composing an Administration on a broad as well as a permanent basis, I am ready to shake hands even with the persons opposite to me, no less than with the noble Lord in the blue ribband near me, thus forming out of the three parties such a Government as the public may regard with confidence." Having denied in the strongest terms that the delay in composing a new Administration had arisen from any disputes between the two heads of parties recently united, he launched out into severe reflections, or, more properly to speak, accusations against the individuals who, during more than a month, had

governed the country. "A Government," continued Fox, "not conducted by avowed Ministers, by a First Lord of the Treasury or by Secretaries of State, those instruments and puppets of other agents, but by the persons themselves who have hitherto been supposed to possess secret influence, and who now stand forward as the private advisers of his Majesty, to act in opposition to the wishes of his people and to the declared sense of one House of Parliament."

Even if the intention of these words could have been mistaken, Fox, by fixing his eyes on Jenkinson, who was present when he pronounced them, rendered their application obvious to every hearer. Then alluding to the Chancellor, "If," continued he, "we would know who has governed the kingdom and ill-advised the sovereign, we have only to repair to the Upper House. There the great adviser may be seen in his true character. We shall there find sullenness, delay, impediments to public business of every kind, and all the features that characterise the present interregnum." Charges so invidious as well as personal were not suffered to remain without an immediate reply. Governor Johnstone, starting up as soon as Fox had concluded, with his characteristic impetuosity of gesture and language, retorted on Fox the imputations with which he had loaded Lord Thurlow. After passing the highest encomiums on the talents, firmness, and integrity of that great law officer, whom, he said, he considered as one of the pillars of the state, he reminded Fox of the eulogiums which he had pronounced on this very nobleman when a member of Lord North's Administration. "Did he not then declare," exclaimed Johnstone, "that the Chancellor formed the only exception to the Cabinet of that period, who alone ought, from his superior

endowments of mind and of character, to be continued in his high office after the dissolution of that Ministry?" With more temper, calmness, and command of himself, Jenkinson vindicated the line of conduct which he had held under the existing circumstances. He was heard with general and profound attention. "I stand up," said he, "to refute the insinuation of being an evil adviser of his Majesty, and to deny the existence of secret influence behind the throne, in the unwarrantable sense of those expressions. But the prerogative of the crown is not so limited as to proscribe any Privy Councillor from having access to the presence of the sovereign, or to preclude him from offering his advice, if called on to deliver his opinion. If his Majesty is graciously pleased to command my attendance, I am compelled in duty to obey the summons. I confess that during the last five weeks I have been with him more than once. I never went, except on official business; nor did I ever use any secret influence. That idea is only a trap for the credulous multitude. It exists solely in imagination, and is now started merely for political purposes, to which the members of this House cannot be strangers. I appeal to the noble Lord in the blue ribband seated near the right honourable gentleman, with whom I had the honour of serving for ten years, whether my assertion is true or false, and whether that pretended secret influence, so insidiously suggested, ever had any real existence. Not only do I appeal to the noble Lord, but I invoke him to declare it; and so implicit is my reliance on his innate principles of honour, that I submit to abide by his determination."

Convincing as this defence may be esteemed, and as I regard it, yet Fox by no means acquiesced in the truth or solidity of its reasoning. "I admit,"

said he in reply, "that in his capacity of a Privy Councillor the right honourable member is entitled to offer the King his advice. He has a right so to do, but not to give it in secret. There lies the rub! Let the advice be public, and in the face of the Council. There can then be neither cause of suspicion, nor can it be productive of injury. As the matter stands, it assumes a widely different aspect." Lord North, called upon as he had been by Jenkinson, could not remain silent. In the progress of a speech conceived with great ability and tempered by the suavity of his disposition, he endeavoured to justify his union with Fox, as an act founded on public expediency, if not absolute necessity. "Those persons," observed he, "who reprobate the present Coalition forget that it is almost impossible to find in this assembly any individuals now acting together who have not differed materially on great and important points. The Administration existing—if we can be said to have any—is so composed. And when it is considered that there are three great parties in the nation, two must unite in order to form a coalition. All men seem to agree that an Administration ought to be constituted on as broad a basis as possible. Perhaps it is meant a Ministry composed of all the three parties. If such be their meaning, I have not any objection to coincide with them in opinion. The divided and distracted state of the Empire demands a combination of all eminent abilities." Alluding finally to the appeal made by Jenkinson, "I am called on," added he, "by a friend to declare whether, during my Administration, I ever found any secret influence lurking behind the throne subversive of my measures or intentions. I will freely avow that I never did. I have frequently, while in office, received advice



from that right honourable gentleman, but I never knew that he had given any secret advice to his sovereign which he was not ready publicly to justify if the occasion demanded it." No declaration could be less equivocal, nor better calculated to undeceive the believers in secret influence. But the opinion, which dated from a very early period of the King's reign, had taken too deep a hold of the public mind, and was sustained with too much art to be eradicated, although by such testimonies. Even at the present day that conviction is by no means extinct.

Pitt may be said to have terminated the discussion under our review, and never, not even on the 21st of the preceding month, when on the point of laying down his official situation, did he appear to me more an object of just admiration. Lord North and Fox, having formed their political union, had both successively, in the course of addressing the House on that evening, offered to receive him into their Coalition. It rested with him to have composed one of the new triumvirate, in which he assuredly would not have occupied the meanest place. He might have continued at the head of the Exchequer under the Duke of Portland, as he had been under Lord Shelburne. The odium of the Coalition could not have attached to him, who had not contributed in the most remote degree to its formation. Power and office and the emoluments of place lay open to him, and seemed to solicit his acceptance; while, on the other side, he beheld the thorny path of the law or a more sterile and unproductive attendance on Parliament as his only certain resources. From his official and splendid residence in Downing Street he must remove to chambers in one of the Inns of Court. His fortune was narrow and his ambition immeasurable. Yet, placed in a situation so trying to human nature,

his elevated mind, superior to circumstances, aided by a judgment far beyond his years, enabled him to appreciate and to reject the seductive proposition. Perhaps he foresaw that an alliance such as had been made between two heads of party so discordant—an alliance equally odious to the sovereign and to the majority of the nation—however apparently solid might be its foundations, could prove of no long duration. Probably he even anticipated at no remote distance of time his own future Ministerial triumph over the two new allies. Yet even admitting these facts, his line of conduct does not excite less astonishment nor detract from his pre-eminent merits.

In his reply to the offers of the two Coalition chiefs he seemed to be impelled and animated by feelings of a higher description than the mere attainment of power could satisfy unless accompanied by self-approbation and conscious rectitude. "There are persons," said he, "who can easily reconcile to their minds the sacrifice of old principles, and who with ease adopt new rules of conduct. However such modes of acting may agree with tried constitutions and long habits of change, I am as yet too young to relinquish my opinions and to conform my ideas to the tide of interest or to the triumphs of party. I have formed one great principle, which regulates my conduct, and which has taken too deep root in my bosom to be erased even by myself. The gentlemen on the opposite benches talk of extinguishing animosities and modifying or changing their political opinions just as they would change their gloves. The same acts or measures which to-day they reprobate to-morrow they applaud. Those persons whom in the morning they hate and condemn, they esteem it honourable, conscientious, and patriotic to take to their bosom in the evening.

Such maxims are repugnant to my nature. I cannot coalesce with men whose sentiments are diametrically opposed to my own, because if they come over to my ways of thinking, I can place no confidence in them; and if I were to adopt their principles, I should act against my honest judgment. Parties so constituted can have no long continuance. There may be a seeming harmony while their interests point the same road, but only a similarity of ideas can render political friendships permanent." "I therefore," continued he, "think it indispensable for me explicitly to declare that I cannot induce myself to adopt the mode of reasoning by which the present grand Coalition is defended or justified, and that my principles will not conform themselves to the present times." I was a witness of the involuntary applause extorted by this lofty and disinterested declaration, which at once extinguished every hope of Pitt's uniting with the Coalition. He preferred to reserve himself for future occasions of coming forward in public life rather than to purchase present office by the dereliction of those rules of action which he had laid down for his guidance in and out of Parliament. No reply to so hostile and decided an avowal was made by either of the Opposition chiefs, but Mr. Coke's proposed address to the throne, being put, was carried, though not unanimously, yet without any division.

[25th—31st March 1783.] His Majesty, nevertheless, having given a vague and inexplicit answer to the address, by which no information was in fact conveyed relative to the appointment of new Ministers, Lord Surrey agitated the subject again on the 27th, and after complaining of the injurious consequences that resulted to the state from a suspension of all government, concluded by a notice, or rather a menace, that if the vacant offices were not filled

up within four days, he would move for an inquiry into the causes of such delay. Lord North, on the other hand, deprecated all interference in the present state of the business as disrespectful to the sovereign, whose gracious message claimed, he said, the gratitude of the House. The month of March meanwhile rapidly approached its termination; nor was it till the 31st that the King, having exhausted every effort for reconstructing an Administration, of which Pitt would have formed the head, finding the experiment hopeless, as well as impracticable, reluctantly accepted his resignation. Lord Surrey, rising in his place on that day just at the time when Pitt<sup>1</sup> entered the House, instantly demanded of him whether any new Ministers were yet appointed, or what steps had been taken for the purpose. His reply, which informed the House that he was no longer Chancellor of the Exchequer, gave rise to a conversation of no common interest, and of considerable length, during which many curious facts were communicated from various sides of the assembly. The Lord Advocate of Scotland, as an excuse for the long period of time which had elapsed since the resignation of the First Lord of the Treasury, ingenuously avowed that his Majesty had fully designed to place Mr. Pitt in that office, and to form a new Government under his auspices, a determination which the King had only relinquished within two hours of the moment when he was occupied in addressing the House. A declaration so mortifying to the Coalition did not pass unnoticed or uncensured by Fox. After inveighing indirectly against Pitt, as the principal cause of so culpable a suspension of the functions of Government, and stating that while he remained at the head of the Exchequer he must

<sup>1</sup> It was at this time that Selwyn spoke of Fox and Pitt as "the idle and industrious apprentices."—D.

be held responsible for every measure performed in his official capacity, Fox seized the occasion offered to renew the charge of secret influence against Jenkinson.

Sir William Dolben, when alluding to the mention which had already been made of that pretended interference, in the course of a late debate, having observed that he should call for more than mere insinuation or assertion to convince him of its reality, Fox triumphantly appealed to Jenkinson's own admission. "The fact," exclaimed he, "at which, down to the present time, suspicion has only glanced, exultation has avowed. I have not only learned more than I antecedently knew, but more than I ever expected to have heard. I have learned that a Privy Councillor, though he is not a Minister, may offer his sovereign advice, and not be accountable for its effects. Surely this House will never sanction a doctrine so replete with danger to the state. How are we to know the nature of the advice given except by its effects? And if that gentleman has given advice to his Majesty in the present instance, he is the culpable person. The noble Lord in the blue ribband near me, when called on by him on a recent occasion to declare whether he ever found any of his plans or measures frustrated by a concealed influence, answered, I allow, in the negative. But it must be remembered that the individual in question was a friend and supporter of that Administration. What would the consequence be if a Ministry whose views and principles were opposed to his should find their objects subverted and all their projects overturned by a person not in any way responsible for his advice? How would they act in such a case? An upright Administration would have no other alternative than to signify their disapprobation of the interference by the resigna-

tion of their employments." I confess that these observations have always appeared to me to grow out of the British constitution, which demands, as a primary principle, responsibility. Pitt offered no reply to that part of Fox's speech, but he reiterated in the most decisive terms his fixed determination to hold himself wholly unconnected with any political description of men. "I will abide," said he, "by the declaration which I made on a former occasion. I will take no active part either for or against any party, but shall be wholly guided in my conduct by the measures pursued. It will not be without the utmost reluctance that I shall oppose any Administration whatever, nor will I do it unless impelled by a strong conviction of their acting injuriously to the public interests." Having stated that he held himself responsible for every act performed by him as Chancellor of the Exchequer down to the moment of his resignation, he concluded by deprecating Lord Surrey's motion as precipitate, and recommending that it should be withdrawn without a division.

Lord North was by no means silent during this interesting debate, the last which took place on the state of public affairs in the Lower House of Parliament previous to the Coalition assuming possession of the Government. With equal eloquence and ability he endeavoured to show that the arguments urged against a junction of parties on the ground of antecedent differences of opinion were futile and incapable of being maintained by men of candour or of enlarged minds. He must nevertheless have felt how much more dignified and elevated was his position while holding the balance, as he might in some measure be said to do, between Pitt and Fox than when merged in the vortex of the latter luminary. Of the loss that he sustained in public opinion by joining the Rockingham party he received many

painful intimations. Governor Johnstone observed during the debate of the 24th of March that "the noble Lord in the blue ribband till within the last few weeks enjoyed as much of the national confidence as any individual in the kingdom. His character, as it became more generally understood, acquired daily more respect and strength, but," added Johnstone, "the present Coalition has unquestionably shaken him in the estimation of many of his friends." Sir William Dolben, of whose cordial support Lord North must have felt the deepest sense, as it was given him during the most critical period of his Administration, expressed himself on the evening of the 31st of March in equally intelligible language. After catechising, if I may use the term, Lord North respecting the conditions which, it was commonly supposed, the new allies attempted to dictate to the King before they would take office, and hearing that nobleman's indignant denial of the imputed facts, Sir William, while he manifested his dissatisfaction at the bare idea of invading the constitutional prerogative of the sovereign, added, "The independent country gentlemen who have uniformly supported the noble Lord in the blue ribband have done it from approbation of his principles, not from his political power or influence. If, therefore, he expects a continuance of their support after his junction with the party which so long opposed him, he must act in a manner consistent with his former character and professions."

Fox, aided by Burke, exerted all his powers of persuasion in proving to the House the insuperable necessity of his coalescing with Lord North. Endeavouring to inforce a doctrine so indispensable for his own justification, he observed, "The principal cause of our dispute has been done away by the

termination of the American war. On various other points we still differ, but we are not more at variance than the present Chancellor and the Master-General of the Ordnance, or than the Secretary of State for the Southern and the Secretary for the Northern Department, or than the right honourable gentleman opposite me (Pitt) and the learned Lord his friend (Dundas) seated near him have differed in sentiment upon great constitutional points. This country can only flourish, her glory can only be maintained, or her commerce be preserved by unanimity within these walls." However just or solid such principles may be in themselves, their application in the persons of Lord North and Fox did not obtain general approbation. Even among those who supported, many disapproved or condemned their union. An oblivion of all past recriminations, though it might be dictated by ambition and vindicated by policy, yet seemed to imply a mutual sacrifice of principle. Both the heads of party lost much of their popularity; and their possession of power neither reposing on royal favour nor on the approbation of the people, proved to be without any deep foundation. These reflections were, however, obliterated by present success. Lord Surrey having been induced to withdraw his motion on the presumption that a Ministry would be formed in the course of a very few days, the House adjourned. Nor were those expectations frustrated, for within forty-eight hours afterwards, his Majesty, finding it vain to protract his resistance and impossible to set up any Administration with a chance of success, surrendered at discretion by sending a second time for the Duke of Portland.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This nobleman had now been twenty-one years Duke of Portland, and was forty-five years of age. He died in 1809. He was a man of great respectability and vast mediocrity. Walpole ridiculed Fox's



[*2d April 1783.*] If we consider, by the abstract principles of the British constitution as recognised at the Revolution of 1688, which compels the sovereign to listen to the voice of the majority of the House of Commons, the conduct of George III. in resisting for near six weeks their votes and their addresses; if we reflect, moreover, that the consequence of his pertinacity produced a suspension of many of the essential and vital functions of the executive Government, at a moment, too, when the exertions of a vigorous Administration were peculiarly demanded in order to reduce various of the military and naval establishments to the standard of peace; if we try his actions by these criterions, we may be tempted to accuse him of sacrificing national objects to the gratification of his private resentments or prejudices. But theory and practice often lead to such opposite conclusions, that it becomes unsafe to reason always from the former, however solid may appear the foundations. It is certain that though the country anxiously desired to see an efficient Government established, and deeply lamented the want of it for so long a time, yet the King by no means suffered in the estimation of his people at large on account of the desperate contest that he had maintained against the Coalition.

The nation in general regarded the union formed between Lord North and Fox as a mutual sacrifice of moral and political principle to ambition, or rather to the love of office. In vain did those leaders endeavour to justify it by recurring to past periods of our history (in particular to the year 1757), when similar coalitions were known to have been

assertion that the nation called for the Duke, "who, till his nomination to Ireland, scarce a hundred men knew to exist. He has lived in ducal dudgeon with half-a-dozen toad-eaters, secluded from mankind behind the ramparts of Burlington Wall, and overwhelmed by debt without a visible expense of two thousand pounds a year."—D.

made between contending factions. The interval of eleven months which had scarcely elapsed since Fox and Burke were accustomed, day by day, to denounce their new ally as the most incapable, subservient, and criminal of Ministers, appeared too short, and the transition from enmity to friendship seemed too sudden, to admit of being easily or satisfactorily explained to vulgar comprehension. His Majesty's principles, however mistaken they might be, were admitted to be upright, and intentionally directed always to the felicity of his subjects. America, which had so long formed the object of contest, being lost with the termination of the war, terminated likewise the King's unpopularity, which had principally originated from that source ; while, on the other hand, Fox, who during several years had stood so high in the estimation of the people as a patriot, now, in his turn, attracted severe observations on his recent junction with a Minister, the author, as he asserted, of all the misfortunes which he had eloquently depicted, and which were still deplored throughout the country. These sentiments and opinions, which began already to operate, and which only required time to mature, protected the King against any effects of popular disapprobation. But they could not prevent or longer protract his surrender to the combined leaders, who now compelled him to receive them into his councils without further delay.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The character of George III. was uniformly moral and uniformly discreet. He was what we call a "steady boy" in early youth. A confidential friend, and natural son, indeed, of one of my uncles, was about the court in Leicester Fields when Prince Frederick of Wales died. He told my mother the following story :—The Princess was sitting, one day of her early widowhood, pensive and melancholy. Her two eldest sons were playing about the room. "Brother," said the second boy, "when you and I are men grown, you shall be married and I will keep a mistress." "Be quiet, Eddy," replied the present King (George III.) ; "we shall have anger presently for your nonsense. There must be no mistresses at all." "What you say?" cried old



*George III.*



In the audience that he gave the Duke of Portland for the purpose of forming a new Administration, he did not affect to conceal, or even to disguise, the painful emotions by which he was agitated on the occasion. He observed to that nobleman that the Ministerial arrangement to which he now submitted being altogether compulsory, the new Ministers might dispose of the Cabinet places and other offices as they should think proper; that he would not oppose or refuse his signature to any Act presented to him officially for his sanction; but that the responsibility of advising such measures must wholly rest with them. And he added that he would not create any new British peers at their recommendation, a circumstance of which he gave them distinct and early notification. The Coalition having acquiesced, at least tacitly, in these avowed principles of the King's conduct, took possession of the Government; the Duke of Portland being placed at the head of the Treasury, and Lord John Cavendish a second time becoming Chancellor of the Exchequer. Fox returned to the Foreign Office, as was naturally to be expected, leaving to Lord North the Secretaryship of State for the Home Department. Lord Keppel, who, disapproving of the conditions of the late peace, had resigned the post of First Lord of the Admiralty immediately after its conclusion, in which high employment he had been replaced by Lord Howe, was reinstated in his ancient functions; while Lord Stormont became President of the Council. I have been assured that the nobleman last mentioned did not accept that situation till he had clearly understood, as he conceived, the King's pleasure upon the subject, who

Augusta; "you more need learn your pronouns, as your preceptor bid you do. Can you tell what is a pronoun?" "Yes, very well," replied Edward; "a pronoun is to a noun what a mistress is to a wife—a substitute and representative."—P.

not only approved, but wished him to take the office, as it would exclude an enemy from occupying so important a place. Yet it is difficult to reconcile this asserted permission and approbation with the resentment that his Majesty is known to have subsequently expressed at Lord Stormont's thus actively joining the Coalition. The Privy Seal was, lastly, given to the Earl of Carlisle.

By this new Ministerial arrangement, this Cabinet, which, under Lord North, had consisted of nine individuals, and which, under the two succeeding Administrations, was augmented to eleven, became reduced to seven persons. At first inspection there seemed, however, to be something like an equal distribution of power between the two leaders and parties who had recently coalesced, the Rockingham party reckoning four, and their new allies counting three votes. But, on closer examination, the fallacy became palpable, and it was evident that Fox in reality possessed the whole authority of Government. Not only he commanded a numerical majority, he likewise held the Treasury under his complete influence. Nor was this the single circumstance that gave him a preponderating weight in every measure or deliberation. The energy and activity of his talents, too, when contrasted with the flexibility and indolence of Lord North, doubled his personal as well as political consequence. His three friends in the Cabinet were, moreover, incapable, if they had even been desirous, of setting limits to his ambition or of restraining his ascendancy. To Fox, the Duke of Portland might indeed be said to owe his elevation to the post of First Lord of the Treasury, an eminence to which his own very moderate abilities, though sustained by his high rank, could not of themselves have conducted him. In like manner, Lord Keppel stood indebted for

both his place and his peerage principally to Fox. Lord John Cavendish, from his great hereditary connections and recognised integrity of character, might be esteemed, it is true, an honour and an ornament to any Ministry ; but, though independent in mind and in fortune, yet he appeared to be not the less under Fox's intellectual dominion, who on all occasions propelled and guided him, in and out of Parliament. Lord North, on the contrary, by no means possessed or exerted the same influence over his two Cabinet adherents as Fox maintained among his coadjutors ; Lord Stormont, in particular, might be considered as wholly independent of Lord North's control. Nor did the offices of President of the Council and of Privy Seal in themselves confer the same active rights of Ministerial interference as did the Treasury, the Exchequer, and the Admiralty, all which departments lay in Fox's partition of employments. These circumstances are not unessential when we speculate on the state of public affairs under the Duumvirs, and may partly explain the causes from which arose some of the most affirmative measures subsequently adopted by the Coalition.

If Fox, however, took effectual care to secure the real power of the state in his own hands, he in return allowed Lord North to bestow many of the great ostensible situations about the court among his immediate friends. The Earl of Dartmouth, instead of Privy Seal, the Cabinet office that he had formerly held, was made Lord Steward ; while the Earl of Hertford<sup>1</sup> appeared again in the drawing-room, reinvested with his white wand of Lord Chamberlain. Lord Townshend, who replaced

<sup>1</sup> For an interesting trait of the Earl's character, see Walpole to Lady Ossory, November 16, 1782, on the death of that noble woman, the Countess of Hertford.—D.

the Duke of Richmond at the head of the Ordnance, was a nobleman of very considerable ability, but of great eccentricity of manners and character, which seemed sometimes to approach almost to alienation of mind. Cheerful in his disposition, void of all pride or affectation, communicative, affable, convivial, facetious, and endowed with uncommon powers of conversation, he was formed to acquire popularity. He eminently possessed the dangerous talent of drawing caricatures, a faculty which he did not always restrain within the limits of severe prudence, though he no more spared himself than he did others. It is well known that he drew his own portrait, habited in the state dress of Lord Lieutenant, having his hands tied behind him, in order to show how destitute he was of political power or of the means of conferring favours. This allegorical picture, I have been assured, was hung up in a private cabinet of the Castle at Dublin; and when solicited to bestow offices or rewards over which he had no control, he used to conduct the importunate suitor into the room, at the same time asking him if he recognised the likeness and understood the application. In Ireland, while administering the affairs of that kingdom during five years, he gave general satisfaction; and I remember Courtenay eulogising him in the House of Commons in the language which Horace uses to Augustus—

“Longas, o utinam, dux bone, ferias  
Præstes *Hiberniæ*; dicimus integro  
Sicci manè Die, dicimus uvidi,  
Quum sol oceano subest.”

Indeed, not one of the Viceroy's sent over to Dublin in the course of twelve years, between 1772 and 1784, could compete with Lord Townshend in the affection of the Irish. Lord Harcourt



was too grave and measured in his manners; the Earl of Buckinghamshire had too cold, stiff, and lofty a deportment; Lord Carlisle was too fine a gentleman and too highly bred; the Duke of Portland and Earl Temple both, either from natural disinclination or from physical inability, observed too rigorously the virtues of temperance and abstemiousness, virtues by no means congenial to the soil; lastly, Lord Northington,<sup>1</sup> though amiable and conciliating, was too infirm in his health to acquire general attachment in a country where no qualities, however eminent or meritorious, could recommend to national approbation, unless accompanied by personal sacrifices and exertions of various kinds. The Duke of Rutland, whom Pitt sent over to the sister kingdom early in 1784, by the magnificence of his establishment, the conviviality of his temper, and the excesses of his table, in all which particulars he resembled his father, the Marquis of Granby, obliterated or superseded Lord Townshend in their regard; but he paid for the triumph with his life, falling a victim in the vigour of his age, within four years, to his irregularities.

Mr. Charles Townshend,<sup>2</sup> commonly called "Spanish Charles," from the circumstance of his having formerly acted as secretary to the English Embassy at Madrid, and whom Pitt created, with nine other individuals, a peer in 1797, by the title of Lord Bayning, was made Treasurer of the Navy. Wallace, though labouring under ill-health, became once more

<sup>1</sup> As a characteristic of Lord Northington, the Irish Lord Lieutenant at this time, Walpole, after writing nonsense to Mason, says, "I have written something like Irish. You may make a present of the sentence, if you please, to Lord Northington; it may be of service to him." The title became extinct in 1786.—D.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Townshend, son of the Hon. William Townshend and grandson of the second Viscount Townshend, was created, 20th October 1797, Baron Bayning of Foxley, co. Berks. He died 16th May 1810.—ED.

Attorney-General. Lord Sandwich, whose wants made office essential to him, instead of presiding over the Admiralty, and directing that great department of state, dwindled into Ranger of the two parks ; but as some compensation for this official degradation, his son, Lord Hinchinbrook,<sup>1</sup> a nobleman deservedly acceptable to his Majesty, as well as one of the most hospitable, honest, loyal, frank, and friendly men in the kingdom—for I had the honour to enjoy his friendship and to live much in his society—was made Master of the Buckhounds. If he fell far below his father in ability, application, and talents for public business, he possessed greater private virtues. Sir Grey Cooper, who had been one of the joint Secretaries of the Treasury, obtained a seat at that Board. Not that Fox appeared by any means oblivious of his friends, a fault which never could be imputed to him. Burke went back with great alacrity to the Pay Office, as did his brother, Richard Burke, to the joint Secretaryship of the Treasury. Frederick Montagu resumed his former place at the same Board, while the Earl of Surrey, whose recent services and prominent merit in Parliament (where he never shrunk from any exertion, however rough or personal), could not be passed over without remuneration, filled the remaining vacancy. Considerably more than two centuries had elapsed since the gallant and distinguished Earl of Surrey, the fair Geraldine's lover, sacrificed to the tyranny of Henry VIII., and the last who bore the title, had occupied a situation in the councils of the crown.<sup>2</sup>

Colonel Fitzpatrick was made Secretary at War,

<sup>1</sup> He succeeded his father as fifth Earl of Sandwich in 1792, and died in 1814.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Henry, Earl of Surrey, K.G., son of Thomas, third Duke of Norfolk, born in 1517, and executed 21st January 1547. The brilliant statesman, poet, and warrior.—ED.

and though his talents always appeared to me to be of a description more elegant than solid, more adapted to entertain and delight than fitted for the desk or the cabinet, yet I have been assured, even by those who were not partial to him among his own profession, that he gave great as well as general satisfaction while he held that employment. His person tall, manly, and extremely distinguished, set off by his manners, which, though lofty and assuming, were nevertheless elegant and prepossessing, these endowments added grace to the attractions of his conversation. No man's society was more eagerly courted among the highest orders by persons of both sexes. He possessed no mean poetic talents, peculiarly for compositions of wit, fancy, and satire, in all which he far exceeded Fox. His verses on a lady of high rank and of still greater beauty, beginning—

“In seventeen hundred and seventy-three  
My beloved Isabella first smiled upon me,”

may vie in playful elegance and facility with many of Suckling's, Lord Dorset's, or Lord Chesterfield's sonnets. They have never yet been printed, and I shall not be the first to consign them to the press. The marriage of his sister with Stephen, Lord Holland, cemented the intimacy between Fox and Fitzpatrick. They had been brought up together from early life, remained inseparable to the last, and were strongly attached to each other. Fitzpatrick, like his illustrious friend, was a constant votary of Brookes's club, and became during many years a victim to play; but he possessed one advantage over Fox, namely, the support arising from a profession. As a member of the House of Commons, he obtained no distinction for eloquence, though he never betrayed when addressing Parliament any want of

ideas, language, or ability. Under Charles II. he would have been more in his element and in his place than under such a prince as George III., of whose court he must, nevertheless, always be considered to have formed a constellation and an ornament. In the "*Mémoires de Grammont*" he would assuredly have filled a very distinguished niche. I witnessed the spectacle of his surviving many of the personal and intellectual graces which nature had conferred on him with so lavish a hand.<sup>1</sup> During the last months of his life, weakened by the progress of diseases which enfeebled his frame, though perhaps without impairing his powers of understanding, it might yet be in some degree said of Fitzpatrick, as the King of Prussia observed of Prince Eugene in the trenches before Philipsburg in 1734, "*Ce n'étoit plus que l'ombre du grand Eugene.*"<sup>2</sup>

Sheridan became the other Secretary of the Treasury, and Lee was replaced in his former situation of Solicitor-General. For the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland the Earl of Northington<sup>3</sup> was selected

<sup>1</sup> "His account of the decay of General Fitzpatrick's mind deserves to be noticed, as another example of falsehood in relating the most recent event. Those who met that distinguished person on the last day of his dining abroad, which was within a fortnight of his death, can bear witness to the perfect soundness of his understanding, and even to the refinement and elegance of some of his observations on literature, notwithstanding the depression and feebleness to which he was then reduced by a distemper which so soon after proved fatal." —*Edinburgh Review*, vol. xxv. p. 205.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Fitzpatrick was the second son of the Earl of Ossory. "Irish antiquaries affirm," says Walpole, "that the Fitzpatricks are so ancient, that they reckoned many generations before the first man was created." "Dick Fitzpatrick" was born in 1747 and died in 1813, long before which latter period the then battered old beau rather vegetated than lived. He was the first man who ascended alone in a balloon, from Oxford. The best samples of his poetry were his own epitaph at Sunning Hill and the lines in the temple to "Friendship" at St. Anne's Hill.—D.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Henley, second and last Earl of Northington, who died unmarried in 1786. He was son of the celebrated Lord Chancellor.—ED.

by Fox. His person, unwieldy, vacillating, and destitute of grace, seemed to disqualify him for any active exertions of body, nor were his faculties brilliant, but I have always heard that he gave great satisfaction, and was as much beloved as his infirmities permitted during the period of his short residence in that kingdom. The embassy to Paris Fox destined for the Duke of Manchester. His figure, which was noble, his manners affable and corresponding with his high rank, prepossessed in his favour, but his fortune bore no proportion to his dignity. Though a man of very dissipated habits and unaccustomed to diplomatic business, he did not want talents. Such were the leading arrangements made by the "Coalition" on their coming into power. The Great Seal, which no expostulations on the part of the King could induce them to leave in Thurlow's hands, and which Wedderburn wisely declined accepting under the circumstances of the time, was put into commission, Lord Loughborough being placed at its head. He constituted a valuable acquisition to the new Ministry in the House of Peers.

Lord North, it must be reluctantly confessed, however circumstances may justify his union with Fox on principles of policy, of personal safety, or of necessity, did not perform in this great drama the most dignified part. After having occupied the post of First Minister, at the head of both the Treasury and the Exchequer, during twelve sessions, it seemed to ordinary observers no little degradation, at more than fifty years of age, to accept the Secretaryship of State for the Home Department, and to take his seat as such on the Treasury bench where he had so long presided, now squeezed between Fox and Burke. I own that I never contemplated him in that situation without reflections allied to pity. It

is true that we have since seen, and still actually behold, an ex-First Minister<sup>1</sup> placed in the same department after having presided at the helm during more than three years. But it would be invidious, and it is unnecessary, to draw any comparison between the two individuals. Neither their descent, the period of their respective Administrations, nor even, according to my estimate, their abilities, can be considered as having any similarity, and still less any parity. Mr. Addington was, moreover, soon removed from the immediate scene of his fall in 1804, and translated early in the ensuing year to the Upper House of Parliament,<sup>2</sup> while Lord North remaining a commoner, with the insignia of the Garter across his breast, exhibited a spectacle of Ministerial greatness in eclipse, like Wolsey, or like Clarendon, or like Bolingbroke. Even the compliments and the caresses of his late bitter opponents, now become his coadjutors, always appeared to me only to sink him in the estimation of the House. But he seemed himself to be wholly exempt from or superior to any painful emotions at the political change that he had undergone. The same cheerful complacency, ready wit, and unaffected good-humour always characterised him under every circumstance. Sometimes he even jested on his own descent from

<sup>1</sup> Henry Addington, son of Dr. Anthony Addington, an eminent physician. In 1784 he was elected M.P. for Devizes, and in 1789 was chosen Speaker, an office to which he was re-elected in the three succeeding Parliaments of 1790, 1796, and 1801. He became First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in March 1801, and held these offices until May 1804. In 1805 he was created Viscount Sidmouth. He was Home Secretary in Lord Liverpool's Administration in 1815, when these Memoirs were published.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Addington was very generally nicknamed the Doctor, and as such he figures in the "Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin." The following epigram upon him was circulated :—

"Ci dessous reposant  
Le Sieur Addington git,  
Soi-disant politique  
Et médecin malgré lui."—ED.

the highest situation to a subordinate place in Government. The apartments constituting the Secretary of State's office at the Treasury being situate on the second floor, he experienced some fatigue in ascending so many steps, and I recollect his once complaining, when out of breath, of the length of the staircase. Frequently, from the effect of long habit or from absence of mind, forgetting the change in his official situation, he went straight to the Treasury chambers on the first floor. Such was the oblivious felicity and equality of his temper, that these accidents, which would have distressed more irritable men, never externally discomposed him. His eldest son, Colonel North, who had so actively exerted himself to effect the Coalition, was made one of the two Under Secretaries in his father's office.

[3d—15th April 1783.] It is unquestionable that there existed a desire, if not a decided intention, on the part of the new Administration, about this period, of calling up Lord North to the House of Peers. The Duke of Richmond, when speaking in the House on the 8th day of April, said, "Rumours prevailed that the assembly which he addressed was speedily to receive an honourable increase, by the introduction among them of the recently appointed Secretary for the Home Department." Far from denying, the Duke of Portland, then First Lord of the Treasury, avowed the fact. "As to the question put," answered he, "it is true that the Secretary of State just named is to be called up to a seat among us; but when that event may take place, it is not in my power to say, for reasons which must be obvious to every person who hears me." Allusion to the circumstance, in the most pointed terms, was repeatedly made by members of the House of Commons, without receiving any contradiction. Pitt questioned

Lord North on the subject only about a fortnight after this time. Apprehensive of that nobleman's opposition to his projected motion for a parliamentary reform, Mr. Pitt observed, while speaking in his place, that "report asserted the noble Lord in the blue ribband only remained a member of the Lower House for the purpose of opposing his proposition." Lord North replied, "That to spread such a report of his remaining in that assembly for any particular design or object was in itself very indecent. It becomes not me to assert," added he, "when or whether I may ever be called up to the other House, and honoured with a seat in it. Both the power and the will reside in others. But whether my stay here may be of longer or of shorter duration, I will always perform my duty and give my opinion freely upon every subject that may come before me." He could not more clearly admit the truth of the supposition, though various reasons or impediments probably prevented its accomplishment. The King having expressly informed the Ministers when they came into office that he would not create any British peer at their recommendation or request, it was not likely that he would violate his resolution in order to elevate Lord North to that dignity, against whom, as may be supposed, he felt highly offended, or rather indignant, on account of his union with Fox. Lord North himself, however well he supported appearances to the world, yet probably would not have disliked, after the recent events, to have quitted a scene such as the House of Commons, where he made an inglorious figure, and where recollections very humiliating must continually intrude on his mind. Fox, on the other hand, could not possibly be averse to such a removal, as he wanted no coadjutor to aid him on the Treasury bench, while Lord North's retreat would have left him sole Minister,



as well as manager, of the Lower House of Parliament. But for that very reason, Lord North ought to have felt himself in some measure compelled to remain a commoner. His party, already shaken and diminished, he well knew would have soon crumbled away when they no longer beheld nor could have had daily access to their leader. Neither would he have attracted the same consideration in the other House as he excited in his actual situation. Pressed between the amity of Fox and the hostility of Pitt, with the loss of America about his neck, he saw himself obliged, after having so long performed the first figure, to become only the third personage in the state.

The public business of every kind, which had been nearly eight weeks delayed by the extraordinary occurrences that we have contemplated, at length began in Parliament. For the third time within the space of about twelve months the Treasury bench exhibited a complete change. Many persons came down on the 9th of April to witness the extraordinary spectacle of Lord North and Fox taking their places side by side as joint Secretaries of State, a metamorphosis, or, more properly to speak, a transition to be ranked among the most wonderful which the eighteenth century displayed in political life. The new Chancellor of the Exchequer<sup>1</sup> opened his financial administration a few days later with a loan, the conditions of which, if not as beneficial or advantageous to the country as might have been wished, were nevertheless, he said, as good as could be procured under the circumstances of urgency and procrastination in which the culpable obstinacy of the late Ministers had involved every department. Pitt, who had now taken his place on the Opposition bench, and who from this time, notwithstanding his

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Cavendish.

youth, was justly considered as the head of that party in the House of Commons, opposed and censured the terms of Lord John Cavendish's loan, but without venturing to divide the House upon it, as the Coalition, he was aware, would have much outnumbered him. Governor Johnstone expressed himself likewise with great severity on the subject of the bargain, qualifying, nevertheless, his condemnation with compliments to Lord John's recognised integrity and purity of intention. Fox admitted it to be a disadvantageous loan for the public, but added that he heard with some astonishment the censures passed on it by Mr. Pitt, he being the principal cause that the terms were bad by his delay in quitting office. "With respect to a competition," continued he, "which the right honourable gentleman has recommended as a preferable mode, none such could be obtained on the present occasion, the bankers having connected themselves so strongly and acted so much in concert that it became impossible to surmount the impediments raised by them." Pitt, in reply, treated the reasons alleged by the Secretary of State with derision, adding that "perhaps a term which had lately become celebrated, a coalition of bankers, might better express his meaning than the word concert." Nor did Pitt limit his sarcasms to political allusion, for Fox having, in order to justify the principle on which the twelve millions had been borrowed, adverted to the doctrine of chances, Pitt replied that "the reasoning adopted was only becoming a gambler and a gamester, who takes up money desperately without intending ever to repay the principal." The Secretary retorted with asperity, vindicated himself from the imputation thrown on him, and by very solid arguments supported the transaction. Lord North, who was present, took merely a subordinate part in

the debate, leaving the burthen to be supported by Fox. Pitt's moral superiority to his Ministerial antagonists, as resulting from character, was strongly manifested throughout the whole discussion.

[25th April 1783]. Lord John's loan having borne a premium of eight per cent. within a week after its negotiation, the subject was again agitated in Parliament with augmented violence, Fox still taking on himself the principal defence of the measure. As he persisted in rendering the late Ministers responsible for the terms, on account of the hurry in which it was unavoidably concluded, Pitt called on him to desist from using such language, or, if he continued it, to come forward with a charge against himself personally, and not to make it by insinuation, but in direct words. Lord North vainly endeavoured to moderate these mutual recriminations, and to infuse some good-humour into the discussion. Pitt was not to be mollified by wit or conciliated by advances. "The Secretary of State," said he, "not content with attempting to justify the loan, accuses me of neglecting to borrow while I was Chancellor of the Exchequer, when the three per cents. were up at seventy. Has he forgotten the menaces which were thrown out against the late Administration if they attempted to negotiate any measure of finance? Was not this House urged to watch us narrowly, in order that no loan might be set on foot; not even the Mutiny Bill passed, so necessary for controlling the army; nor any act which could appear like the operation of permanent Ministers, because a coalition had been just formed to seize upon the Government?" Such an expression was not of a nature to be passed over by the Secretary in silence. "I insist," answered he, "that it is a rash and unjustifiable assertion. The late Cabinet was driven from office,

as I trust every Cabinet will be, the members of which act wrong, by a majority of this House. By the same constitutional means the Ministry of the noble Lord near me was removed, a measure in which the right honourable gentleman fully concurred. Does he now mean to deny that the House of Commons possess any right of interference in the government of the country? If he does, the indecent expression which he has just used may be consistent with such principles. But if he has not forgotten or abandoned his original ideas and opinions, I hope he will forbear from applying such appellations to the line of conduct which, twelve months ago, he himself approved." Far, however, from disavowing, or in any degree retracting, the obnoxious words, Pitt not only repeated them, but declared that he meant to use them on all future occasions, as being the only appropriate expressions when alluding to the manner in which the Coalition had obtained possession of power. "I confess at the same time," added he, "that had they ever been applied to the conduct which drove from employment the noble Lord in the blue ribband, I should have expressed my indignation at it; but I never can consent to regard two things so dissimilar in the same point of view." If public opinion, independent of Parliament, could have raised any man to office, Pitt would unquestionably have been elevated in April 1783 to the situation which he attained eight months later, in December of the same year. But the Coalition remained masters of the Government for the present, and compelled him to confine his opposition to verbal remonstrances. He knew his party to be too weak for hazarding a division, which could only have exposed the paucity of his numbers.

[7th May 1783.] Nor did Pitt prove more suc-

cessful in an attempt, which he soon afterwards renewed, to effect a parliamentary reform than he had been in the former session. He pronounced, indeed, a most eloquent address upon the subject, and was supported in his motion by Fox. Two proselytes likewise, Mr. Thomas Pitt and Mr. Dundas, having read each their political recantation, adopted his principles for rendering the representation more extended, as well as more pure and incorrupt. But the House remained deaf to all these arguments, though illustrated by examples, the latter of which did not even appear to have obtained for those who exhibited them the praise either of disinterestedness or of sincerity. Fox and Sheridan, while they sustained Pitt's proposition, yet treated with contempt and derision the pretended sacrifice of the borough of Old Sarum, which Mr. Thomas Pitt affected to offer up at the shrine of the British constitution, as a victim to its renovated purity. If we reflect on the close degree of consanguinity that existed between William and Thomas Pitt,<sup>1</sup> who were cousins-german, a relationship strengthened by personal friendship, and if we likewise recollect that Thomas represented the elder branch of the family, we may perhaps incline to think that he relied on being speedily raised to the peerage for this mark of devotion, as effectively took place scarcely eight months afterwards. Dundas, who had a long and a keen political sight, having already determined on attaching his future political fortune to Pitt, probably thought a speculative political tenet to be undeserving of contention. But the recantation pronounced by both rather

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Pitt was a finical and ladylike man. He married Miss Anne Wilkinson, a rich merchant's daughter, and was father by her to the mad Lord Camelford. The other sister, poor devil! married Lord George Sackville's Smith, as they called him, and was by him mother to the hero Sir Sidney Smith.—P.

tended to throw ridicule on the proposition than to recommend it to the House. Lord North made ample amends for his passive inactivity during the preceding session, when a similar discussion had taken place. He spoke with uncommon ability, wit, and force of argument against all representative innovation. Powis, who rarely coincided with him on any point, joined him on this occasion.

It has always appeared to me that Pitt's proposition for a parliamentary reform in 1783 was liable to less exception than the motion which he made in May 1782. That plan opened wide the door of innovation, as it proposed "a committee to be appointed for inquiring into the state of the national representation in Parliament ;" whereas, on the present occasion, he named his specific remedies for the alleged evil. Among them, the principal cure for court influence and corruption was "an addition of knights of the shire and of representatives of the metropolis." We must own that, as far as theory may be trusted, of all the experiments which could be tried on the British constitution, this seems to promise the fairest for success, or in all cases to be productive of the least injury. It was compared, perhaps with propriety, to the infusion of new blood into the animal body. Pitt left the deliberative wisdom of Parliament to determine how many county members should be added, but he gave it as his own opinion that they ought not to be under one hundred. Powis, who spoke very early in the debate, admitted that, among all the measures devised for ameliorating the composition of the Lower House of Parliament, the present was open to least objection, but he did not on that account allow it to be proper for adoption. With great ability and effect he called on the clerks to produce and to read over, as most essential when such a subject was under

discussion, the petitions for a more equal or extended representation from the populous towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and Sheffield. After a careful examination, the clerks informed him that not one of those three great manufacturing places had sent any petition to Parliament. "What! not to be found in the list!" exclaimed Powis. "How negligent! How oblivious of their duty to the state and to themselves! Do they then regard themselves as outcasts from the constitution? How can they so forget to demand a boon which would restore them to employment, to trade, and to happiness!" The House felt the full force of this ingenious sarcasm.

Thomas Pitt, though he exposed himself to much severe comment, not unaccompanied with ridicule, for his tergiversation in supporting the present motion, when in the preceding session he had opposed a proposition of a similar nature, yet alleged some very plausible reasons for his versatility. He was indeed a very plausible speaker, and had a seductive species of querulous eloquence which characterised him. Nor did he, though he coincided with his relative and friend, by any means disgrace himself in the manner of doing it. On the contrary, while he surrendered to the principle, he opposed and resisted the application. To the augmentation of the county members he assented, but not to the number below which the mover had declared they ought not to fall. Thomas Pitt protested against the introduction of so large a body of new men, who would far exceed, he said, the limits dictated by prudence and caution. "If no other person will do it," added he, "I will offer an amendment by inserting the words 'an augmentation of one member to each county in England and Wales;' and I am determined to take the sense of the House upon it."

There was nothing servile or dependent in this line of conduct. Having expressed in language of energy and animation his respect for a well-balanced, limited, and mitigated monarchy, such as ours ought ever to be, he drew with the pencil of a master the two extreme cases: one of a Minister who should throw all power into the scale of the crown, contrasted with the other who avowed his intention of making the balance preponderate in favour of the people. It was not possible to mistake that by the former portrait he meant to designate Lord North; by the latter, Fox. Both were highly coloured, yet not destitute of truth. When he had depicted the calamities resulting from a bad Administration, supporting itself by corruption in defiance of public opinion, of the independent part of Parliament and of the nation, which Government he denominated "the more absolute as wearing the mask of liberty," he held up to view the opposite extreme. "If," observed he, "on the other hand, in a constitution poised like our own, the force of cabal and faction could at any time seize on the executive authority equally against the sense of the sovereign and of the people;—if the titular monarch should be so disarmed and pinioned as to be allowed no choice in the nomination of his Ministers; no opinion as to the measures pursued; no free will as to granting or withholding the favours and graces of the crown; in a word, if nothing should remain to the monarch except the mortifying pre-eminence of sustaining daily insults on the throne, I should not hesitate to denominate such a Government a republic, and a republic of the worst description."

Neither of the two Secretaries of State could pass over without notice allusions at once so severe and so personal. Lord North contrived, with uncommon felicity of argument and expression, to blend his own



defence with the opposition which he made to the motion. Rarely have I witnessed, even from him, a display of greater talent, pleasantry, and sound reasoning. Borrowing part of his artillery from Shakespeare, he played, in a manner peculiarly entertaining, upon the hundred knights proposed by Pitt to be added to the county members. "I say, however, as I trust the majority will say this night," continued he, "No! not fifty! What! not fifty! No! not one. The American war is held up to our view as if it had been the war of the crown in contradiction to the wishes of the people. I deny the fact. It was the war of Parliament, sanctioned throughout its whole progress by both Houses. It was more. It was the war of the people, undertaken for the purpose of maintaining their rights over the dependencies of the Empire. It was, in its commencement, a popular war. Could the pretended influence of the crown have not only procured majorities approaching nearly to unanimity within these walls, but almost unanimous approbation without doors? True it is that ill success rendering it at length unpopular, the people began to cry out for peace. Had the constitution been so corrupt or so disordered as these reformers assert, how comes it that the voice of the people and of this House has so recently prevailed against the power and influence of the crown?"

After having demonstrated that the petitions from various counties of the kingdom laid upon the table had been surreptitiously obtained or were signed only by a minority of the inhabitants and freeholders, he entreated the indulgence of the House while he said a few words personal to himself. Never did I witness a more enthusiastic or more universal encouragement than he received to induce him to proceed. "Well, sir," said he, addressing the chair, "the fact to which I allude is

the accusation respecting bad Ministers being continued in office by the overruling influence of the crown against the wishes of the people. This is not a random stroke. Its direction may be discovered by the quarter from which it comes, and I will not affect to think that it can be levelled against any other person than myself. But the attack is altogether unjust. I was not a Minister of chance, picked up by the sovereign and unknown to Parliament. It was here I first became known. In my rise I was the creature of Parliament. When I fell, I was its victim. You raised me up. You pulled me down. Does my Administration show the undue influence of the crown? No, sir; the history of my political life forms a proof which will overturn a thousand wild assertions of a corrupt influence exerted by the crown which destroys the independence of this assembly. Where then is the necessity for this paraded reformation?"—"The addition of a hundred, or even of fifty county members would give to the landed interest a decided superiority over the monied and commercial. But let us not begin to invade the fabric of the British constitution, which preserves the due equipoise between the several great interests of the Empire! *Principiis obsta*. Let us act as the representatives, not as the deputies of the people. We are not to refer to them before we determine. We are to use our own discretion, seeking no other guidance. In a word, let us reject those specious but dangerous measures, which, if once adopted, will inevitably lead to subversion." We are at a loss whether most to admire the principles, the eloquence, or the reasoning of this admirable address, which would of itself suffice to place Lord North in the first rank of wise, enlightened, and patriotic statesmen.

Fox displayed on that night his usual ability, but

he found himself painfully situated, hampered by his declarations when out of office, compelled to vote against his colleague and to support Pitt, whom he apprehended as his most formidable adversary. He took, however, a sort of revenge by holding up Thomas Pitt to ridicule. Probably, if he could have relied on continuing in office, he would have been inclined to imitate the two examples set him by Thomas Pitt and by Dundas; and as they had abandoned in some degree their preceding opinions and declarations in order to cement their connection with the mover of the proposition, so the new Secretary might have manifested some symptoms of a more favourable disposition towards the crown, and less ardour for popular rights than he had of late years exhibited in Parliament. But Fox well knew on what loose foundations his power reposed. He felt the strong alienation by which the King was animated towards him and his associates in office, and he therefore did not venture on any step which might compromise him with his Westminster constituents, or expose him to the imputation of inconsistency and apostasy. Throughout the whole period of Fox's Ministerial career, while a member of the Coalition, he seems never to have forgotten that he held his situation, not by the choice of the sovereign, but in contradiction to his will. He was, in fact, a tribune arrayed in consular robes, who always beheld before him the Palace Yard convocations, and considered himself as a representative of the people rather than a Minister of George III. Pitt, on the contrary, even while seated on the Opposition bench, appeared to anticipate his speedy return to power as certain, and only to wait for the occasion presenting itself to resume his former functions.

Two individuals of great eminence in Parliament

were prevented on that occasion, though by very different causes, from delivering their opinions on Pitt's proposed measure of reform. The first, Sir George Saville, who rose when Thomas Pitt sat down, and who always strongly supported every proposition for restraining the power of the crown, was compelled by severe indisposition to stop short after pronouncing only a few sentences. The disorders under which he laboured, and which had already impaired his bodily strength, though not the activity of his mind, conducted him soon afterwards to the tomb. Burke whose powerful abilities would have been thrown into the opposite scale, for he was always an enemy to experiments on the representation or on the constitution, stood up when Fox concluded, with the intention of replying to the arguments of the Secretary his friend. But the disinclination evinced to hear him, and the noise made by those members who dreaded the prolixity of his speeches, was so great as at once to irritate and disgust a man who, with all his splendid talents, never learned or practised the secret of knowing how and when to address the House. With strong marks of indignation in his countenance and gestures, he resumed his seat. With perfect truth did Goldsmith assert of Burke, when preparing to open his exhaustless stores of knowledge to men fatigued or averse to receive his information, that—

“ He thought of convincing when they thought of dining.”

While Sheridan possessed so nice a tact, and knew so well how to contract his matter when he perceived an impatience or a disinclination to listen, that he never experienced the mortifying rejection which Burke provoked.

Rigby made a conspicuous figure towards the close of this memorable debate. Unlike Dundas, who

had laid at the feet of Pitt his former opinions, Rigby maintained them in all their force. Nor did he fail to express the utmost astonishment at the change which had taken place in the sentiments of his friend, the learned Lord, on the subject under discussion. The friendship to which he alluded had, however, suffered some injury since Lord North's resignation during more than a year, in consequence of the rapid succession of Ministerial changes<sup>1</sup> and political events, and they no longer acted as formerly in concert. Dundas kept his eye only upon Pitt. Rigby, pressed to pay into the Exchequer his vast balances of public money, was compelled to adapt his conduct to circumstances. Their union might indeed be already considered as at an end. The ex-Paymaster finally joined the Coalition, while the Lord Advocate remained unalterably attached to the rising star of Chatham, by the influence of which, added to his own distinguished abilities, he not only attained and long occupied some of the highest employments, but ultimately closed his career in the Upper House of Parliament. On the present occasion, Rigby expressed himself with his blunt, habitual, contemptuous frankness of language and of manner. Having treated the petitions for a more equal representation as undeserving serious notice, and alluding to the proposed addition of county members, "I do not allow," exclaimed he, "that they are more respectable than the burgesses. I am myself a burgess,<sup>1</sup> and so is the mover of this question. Never will I consent to any innovation or augmentation in the actual numbers of the Commons. Nay, I would prefer beholding another member added to the borough

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Richard Rigby was the son of a linendraper who had amassed a fortune by the South Sea speculation. He was member for the borough of Tavistock.—ED.

of Old Sarum, which consists only of a single tenement, rather than allow another member to the City of London, which is already sufficiently represented in this assembly.”—"The spirit of innovation has been carried too far, while the influence of the crown is too much curtailed. Will Ministers assert," continued he, looking across the house at Fox, "that they do not feel it, and feel it as an impediment to Government in carrying on the most necessary measures of Administration?" The Secretary of State signifying by his gestures that he did not agree to the assertion, "I well know," said Rigby, without being disconcerted, "that here, in this House, I shall receive no other reply. It won't do for gentlemen who have been most clamorous in Opposition, and who have for many sessions declaimed against the influence of the crown, to admit in the face of those whom they have misled that they now, when seated on the Treasury bench, smart under the inconvenience which they have themselves produced. But I am sure they feel it, and the public feel it, not less."—"I am as great an enemy to a dangerous extension of the royal influence as any man within these walls, but it forms as necessary an ingredient in the constitution as the power of the Commons. And I hope the time is not remote when that influence, so decried of late, will be restored to its former necessary and beneficial extent." We cannot wonder that such opinions and principles, however odious they might be to the multitude convened in Palace Yard, should have formed powerful recommendations at St. James's. Pitt's resolutions were finally negatived by a far greater majority than in the preceding year; out of near 450 members who voted, only 149 having divided with him.

[*May 1783.*] No man in office attracted more attention, during the session under consideration,

than Burke; but it was not by any means such as his friends and admirers could contemplate either with pride, with pleasure, or even with approbation. It excited indeed great regret that a person endowed with parts so eminent, and apparently animated by philanthropy so extended, should nevertheless allow himself at times to be led into the most unjustifiable deviations from ordinary prudence and propriety of conduct. In the present instance he involved his party as well as himself in equal embarrassment by his intemperate precipitation. Two individuals, Powell and Bembridge, the one cashier, the other accountant of the military Pay Office, having been accused of malversation in the discharge of their functions, had been dismissed by Colonel Barré from their offices while he was Paymaster of the Forces under Lord Shelburne's Administration. On Burke coming again into that employment, one of his first acts, without previously consulting Fox upon the subject, was to reinstate both those persons in their respective situations. Such a proceeding relative to functionaries labouring under heavy charges, and about to become subjects of criminal prosecution in the Court of King's Bench, naturally formed an object of discussion in the House of Commons, where it excited very pointed animadversion. Burke, petulant and irritable, defended with warmth the step that he had taken, though a measure in itself evidently contrary to the judgment of all parties. Fox, while he tacitly lamented and disapproved the act, yet, as he never abandoned his friends in distress, endeavoured to justify its author. The interference was, nevertheless, peculiarly painful and delicate on his part, Powell, who had risen under his father, the late Lord Holland, being supposed to have connived at some of the appropriations of public money which were attributed, perhaps very

unjustly, by popular prejudice to that nobleman while Paymaster of the Forces. It was for the corrupt concealment of a sum exceeding £48,000 in the accounts of Lord Holland that Powell and Bembridge were now about to undergo a trial. No circumstance, therefore, could have been less agreeable to Fox, while standing in the conspicuous situation of Secretary of State, than to be thus compelled, by Burke's imprudence in restoring them to their places, to come forward as the advocate and apologist of such a transaction.

On the first agitation of the business, Pitt having observed that the restoration of two men accused of malversation appeared to reflect in no ordinary degree on the authors of their dismissal, as well as on the late Attorney-General (Kenyon), who had given his decided opinion against both the individuals, Sheridan rose in order to justify the transaction as far as it involved Ministers in any culpability. His vindication seeming to bear hard upon Kenyon, as if he had neglected his official duty in not commencing and following up a prosecution against them, he, who possessed a more than common portion of irritability, instantly came forward. In terms the most explicit, he protested that as soon as the case of Powell and Bembridge was laid before him he had delivered his opinion that they ought to become objects equally of a civil and criminal pursuit. "In so strong a point of view," added he, "did I see their conduct, as to leave me no hesitation in declaring to the persons who were then in power that such enormous offenders ought not to be suffered to remain in places of trust." Under this heavy charge, made from so high a quarter, Burke did not at first display any unbecoming warmth. On the contrary, he rather endeavoured to extenuate, to explain, and to palliate, than either wholly to



deny or to vindicate the acts committed in his office. But Martin, who had always expressed a decided condemnation of the Coalition, which political junction he embraced every opportunity of reprobating, having observed that he regarded the restoration of the cashier and accountant of the military Pay Office as a gross and daring insult to the public, Burke lost all control over his temper. In a manner the most furious, starting up from the Treasury bench on which he was seated, he unquestionably would have given way to his rage in words the most unbecoming, if more than one of his friends near him had not forcibly pulled him down in his place and held him there. Sir Edward Astley having, nevertheless, repeated Martin's assertion, adding that "to replace two individuals accused of a crime amounting to public robbery implied a contempt of public opinion and was a daring insult," Fox found it high time to interfere. His speech, while it implied his regret at the injudicious conduct of the Paymaster, and his disapprobation of the whole transaction, yet made the most temperate, able, and effectual appeal to the candour and liberality of the House. After declaring that he never had heard of the restoration of the two persons in question till Burke himself had communicated to him the fact at St. James's, just as he was entering the King's closet, he readily admitted the indispensable necessity for an inquiry taking place. "But," added he, "Mr. Burke thinking that punishment ought not to precede inquiry, has restored them to their situations, determined, no doubt, on suiting his future conduct to the eventual issue." With great address Fox threw a veil over the infirmity of his friend, and being assisted by the Speaker, who declared the whole conversation to be disorderly, as there was not any question before the House, the

business was superseded. This discussion took place on the 2d of May.

[19th—21st May 1783.] A transaction of so extraordinary a nature, which involved in it either the Paymaster who had dismissed, or the Paymaster who had restored, the two accused individuals, though it might be arrested for a short time, yet could not, however, be wholly suppressed by Ministerial power and interference. The belief and even conviction of Powell and Bembridge's guilt becoming universal, the subject was soon renewed in the House of Commons. Lord Newhaven,<sup>1</sup> one of the two members for Gatton in Surrey, a borough of which he was then the proprietor, and who had been raised from the rank of a Baronet to the dignity of an Irish peer by Lord North during the course of his Administration, became the involuntary instrument of reviving the discussion. For he having made a motion on the 24th of April to lay on the table the Treasury minute respecting the suspension of Powell and Bembridge, with a view to commence an inquiry into the affair, now moved to discharge the order. He assigned as a reason for this seeming inconsistency that a prosecution having been commenced in the courts below, it would be unbecoming to continue the inquiry within those walls. But his proposition was strongly opposed from various quarters. Sir Cecil Wray, who, though he possessed no superior talents, was independent in mind as well as in fortune, expressed his astonishment that the Paymaster-General should reinstate two persons suspected of so great a crime as the embezzlement of public money. The reasons

<sup>1</sup> William Mayne was created a Baronet in 1763, and elected M.P. for Canterbury in 1774. He subsequently sat for Gatton in Surrey. He was created an Irish peer under the title of Baron Newhaven in 1776, and died in 1794, when the title became extinct.—ED.

assigned by Burke for his conduct, namely, "that he believed them innocent, and that he was responsible, not to the House, but to the public," appeared to him (Sir Cecil Wray) by no means satisfactory.

Powis as well as other members sustaining these arguments, Burke was necessitated to enter on his defence, which he did with temper if not with judgment. It would, indeed, have been most imprudent, as well as dangerous, to have allowed his anger to predominate over his reason, after plunging himself into so complicated an embarrassment. He excused the violence which he had displayed during the former debate by alleging the respect that he felt for the House, and his extreme sensibility to any marks of their displeasure. But he in the same breath desired it to be understood that nothing could be more remote from his present intention than to offer any excuse for his conduct relative to the two unfortunate gentlemen in question. "On that point," added he, "I feel such a sunshine of content within, that if the act were undone, I am convinced I should repeat it. My invariable maxim and rule of conduct is to compassionate and to protect the unfortunate, while I do not find them to be criminal. The individuals under discussion have been committed to my protection by Providence, and I have only performed my duty by replacing them in their situations. I nevertheless disclaim every idea of having either acted in concert with his Majesty's Ministers, or of even having asked their advice. Nay, more, I protest that I have retained these persons in office contrary to their own prayers and entreaties. As to my own share in this affair, I care not how deeply it is probed. My mind, filled with conscious rectitude of intention, was never more tranquil than on the present occasion."

A defence, if such it can properly be denominated, which seemed to set all common rules of human action at defiance, and might justly be thought to impeach the sanity of Burke's mind, did not tend to conciliate his audience, or to stop all further inquiry. Pitt, Dundas, Kenyon, Thomas Pitt, Pepper Arden, Colonel Barré, and many others, persisted in demanding that the Treasury minutes should be laid on the table. Ministers, on the other hand, though they admitted the imprudence of the Paymaster, and lamented it, yet resisted any disclosure whatever, under the pretence that it might prejudice the accused parties if made previous to the criminal proceedings about to take place in the courts of judicature. Fox exerted all the powers of reasoning, and Sheridan exhausted his ingenuity, in endeavours to protect their friend. General Conway, while he avowed that Burke's conduct did not meet his approbation, yet refused to consent to the production of the minutes. Nor did Lord North decline to perform on that evening the service of a faithful ally to his new colleagues. He not only voted, but spoke in the course of the debate with great apparent animation. To him, indeed, and to his adherents, more than to the Rockingham party, was to be attributed the slender majority by which Ministers ultimately prevailed. Even that triumph, if it could deserve the name, was not obtained till Lee, the Solicitor-General, had solemnly pledged himself to the House that the prosecution against Powell and Bembridge should be seriously conducted. As the best proof of his sincerity, he called on the late Attorney and Solicitor-General to aid him in the proceeding. Under these circumstances, after a debate of great acrimony and of considerable length, a division took place. Near three hundred members were

present, of which number one hundred and thirty-seven voted for producing the Treasury minutes. One hundred and sixty-one supported Government, thus carrying the question only by twenty-four. But the real victory remained with Opposition,—the victory of public opinion; for probably among those persons who supported Administration, scarcely ten individuals approved the cause in which they engaged.

Rolle, then member for the county of Devon, who has been since raised to the peerage,<sup>1</sup> justly considering Burke's conduct as not only wrong in itself but insulting to the country at large, brought the consideration of it a third time before the House. Having demanded of the Paymaster whether he still retained his determination to keep Powell and Bembridge in their employments, Burke rose, and pronounced a speech which detained the audience nearly two hours. He was indeed several times interrupted and called to order, the irritation of his temper carrying him into digressions altogether irrelevant to the subject under discussion. Great eccentricity, if not aberration of mind, characterised many passages of his defence, which implied a distempered imagination under the influence of strong feeling, but destitute of the control of sober reason. He compared himself to an Indian savage roasted by one of his countrymen, and served up as a dish or as an *entremet*. After calling on Heaven to witness that in all the proceedings relative to the two accused persons, he had been actuated solely by motives of justice and of conscience, he nevertheless added, that as so large and respectable a body of members had cen-

<sup>1</sup> John Rolle, M.P. in several Parliaments for Devonshire, recreated Lord Rolle of Stevenstone, in 1776. The former title had become extinct on the death of his uncle in 1759.—ED.

sured his conduct he would give way. His bill for reforming the royal household, he said, constituted his irremissible crime, and had procured him numerous enemies. To that cause he appeared or affected to attribute the present attack, as well as the successive interruptions that he underwent. Of Powell and Bembridge he spoke not only as men of uncommon official merit, but of religious integrity. Then diverging to other points apparently unconnected with the topic before the House, he lamented Lord Rockingham's decease, put himself upon God and his country, claimed the merit of his reforms, and added, that he had still great matters of a similar description to propose to Parliament, if they did not fetter him in the mode of carrying them into execution. Mingling some of the finest passages of Virgil and of Shakespeare with his own justification, he impressed his audience with mingled pity and admiration. Having concluded, he started up again, merely to state that Powell had already resigned at his own request, and that Bembridge had made a similar offer; but he trusted the House would not insist on its being carried into execution.

Rolle continuing, nevertheless, of opinion that the latter ought equally to be suspended, Fox interposed, and though he deprecated the measure taking place previous to a trial in Westminster Hall, yet he subjoined, that as so respectable a minority thought otherwise, he wished his friend to accept Bembridge's resignation. Rigby tried, however, one more effort in his behalf, but without effect. The ex-Paymaster making on this occasion common cause with his present successor, after bearing ample testimony to the high merits of the two culprits during thirteen years that he had held the office, endeavoured to show that no possible injury would accrue to the public from suffering Bembridge to

exercise the functions of accountant. His eloquence proved equally unavailing with Burke's pathetic and querulous invocations. The House remained inexorable, and Fox did not dare to hazard the experiment of a second division, by which, whatever might be the result, Government would only augment the obloquy already incurred. Burke, therefore, appeared sullenly to acquiesce, declaring at the same time that he would not be responsible for the consequences which might accrue from the resignation of Bembridge. So doubtful, however, did his submission seem, and so strong was his repugnance to obey the orders of Parliament, that Rolle repeated his inquiries on the subject a few days afterwards, during which short interval of time Powell fell a victim to his reflections. This disastrous circumstance augmenting the irritation of Burke's mind, he refused to answer the question put to him, and the whole business would have been agitated anew if Rigby had not risen to satisfy the demand by declaring that Bembridge was actually suspended.

The House of Commons, however strong a disposition they showed on every occasion to approve and to sanction the general measures of Administration, manifested, nevertheless, strong disapprobation of Burke's conduct in this instance. Powell, overcome either by the weight of his own distress, or by his inability to sustain the public opinion of his culpability, after losing in a great measure the use of his faculties, put an end to his existence with a razor.<sup>1</sup> Bembridge, endowed with a firmer mind or with stronger nerves, was reserved for the infamy of a public trial and condemnation before Lord Mansfield. The

<sup>1</sup> He left his ill-gotten wealth to a relation of the name of Roberts, who took his name, and was commonly called Pogy Powell, a good-natured man, but dissipated. He shot Lord Fauconberg in a duel, provoked, however, by his Lordship.—ED.

prosecution, which took place some months afterwards, reluctantly but ably and fairly conducted by Lee, the Solicitor-General, terminated in a complete exposure of the fraud imputed to Bembridge, for which the court sentenced him to a severe fine and imprisonment. Every exertion which the purity of our jurisprudence will allow was made to soften or to avert the severity of the stroke. Burke, who did not hesitate to appear in court seated upon the bench during the proceedings, gave the strongest attestations to Bembridge's character for integrity. He was accompanied there by Lord North, who likewise condescended to join in a similar testimony to the good conduct and probity of the accused during the time that he had himself formerly held the post of joint Paymaster of the Forces. But these efforts, which proved unavailing, only attracted censure towards the persons who thus attempted to screen from punishment a conspicuous delinquent, while the proofs exhibited of his guilt impressed the public mind with opinions highly unfavourable, not merely to Burke himself, at least in a prudential point of view, but to the Ministry in which he filled so distinguished a place.

[*3d June 1783.*] Scarcely had this affair terminated, when Burke plunged himself into a second embarrassment, hardly less painful to his friends. A bill for the regulation of the Pay Office having been brought into the House of Commons by himself, which gave rise to much discussion and difference of opinion in its passage through the committee, the contending parties agreed to fill up the blanks amicably, after the House rose, round the Speaker's chair. Burke being Paymaster-General, of course took an active part, as did many other members, and the clauses were understood to have been settled in the way specified, by mutual con-



sent. But Mr. Estwick, member for Westbury,<sup>1</sup> on a motion for the third reading of the bill, to the astonishment of the House, rising in his place, preferred a formal charge against Burke for having gone into the engrossing room after the bill in question had been carried there, of expunging three clauses and altering a fourth, all which he remodelled to his own taste. Such an act, if it had been proved, might have led to very grave consequences, and must in any case have attracted public censure or produced a reprimand from the chair. Fox immediately came forward, with his characteristic manliness of mind, to the aid of his friend, whose conduct was severely arraigned by Pitt. The House admitted the Secretary's justification as satisfactory, and did not inflict any mark of its disapprobation on Burke, though the excuses offered or reasons alleged for his conduct were by no means such as completely exculpated him in the opinion of impartial men. It appeared, however, by the testimony of Cornwall the Speaker, that Burke had not, as he was accused of doing, either expunged or altered any clause in the engrossing office. The Speaker at least asserted, and the House lent credit to his assurance, that the misconception had arisen from the circumstance of his having put the question on the four clauses, under an impression that the parties were agreed, in so low a tone of voice that they all passed without notice. Pitt contended that, even though this extraordinary fact were true, yet the expunged clauses must be restored and debated anew by the House. As the proposition could not be refused, they were therefore brought up and finally negatived on a division, though only by a majority of twenty-eight votes. The Speaker's testimony, whether accurate

<sup>1</sup> Samuel Estwick.—ED.

or not, extricated Burke, and Fox manifested the generous ardour of his character throughout the whole transaction, an ardour which always impelled him to cover the errors of those with whom he was connected in politics or friendship. But he did not the less in private condemn Burke's imprudence, and he was said to have warned the Paymaster of the Forces, as he valued his office, not to involve his friends and the Administration of which he composed so conspicuous a member in a third similar dilemma during the remainder of the session.

In the course of the debate which arose respecting the expunged clauses, some expressions of great asperity were used and retorted by the heads of party on opposite sides of the House. Pitt, throughout the whole period of time that the Coalition remained in possession of the Government, always affected to consider Ministers as having availed themselves of the forms of the constitution in order to violate its essence and to hold the King in bondage. While dilating on the act attributed to Burke, he did not hesitate to warn them how they ventured to make a bad use of their ill-gotten power. Lord North immediately rose, and repeating the words with a note of admiration, observed that "if power acquired in consequence of a vote of that assembly condemning the late Administration for having concluded a bad peace could be denominated ill-gotten, undoubtedly the language just used was correct. But if such power had been constitutionally obtained, as he maintained to be the case, then he could not sufficiently express his surprise at the expression." "As to the use," continued he, "which we shall make of our power, I trust it will not discredit us. We have two principal objects to pursue. The first is, to do many things which our predecessors

promised to accomplish, but which they have left undone. The other is, to prevent the mischiefs resulting from what they have done." The ability as well as the wit of this reply did not silence the Opposition. Mr. Hill, in particular, remarked on the political phenomenon which the Treasury bench exhibited, where two individuals who a year ago would not trust themselves together in the same room were now beheld cordially embracing each other. "The House will suppose," continued he, "that I mean the Secretary for the Whig Department and the Secretary for the Tory Department. Such, I will not deny, is my meaning; and I beg to assure the loving couple that, if they continue united for a twelvemonth, they shall have my hearty vote for the flitch of bacon. Necessity is the grand argument used on all occasions to justify the present Coalition. I believe much truth is couched under that single word."

Unquestionably, public opinion was adverse to the Ministers, and as they well knew how odious they were at St. James's, it behoved them to act with the greatest circumspection. Pitt did not allow a single act of their Administration to pass unexamined, and he possessed a great superiority over two men who, however resplendent might be their ability and however numerous their followers, yet were universally considered as having made mutual sacrifices of principle to the gratification of their ambition. It is true that the Cabinet had been taken by storm in March 1782 as well as in March 1783, but the same fact gave rise to very opposite sensations throughout the country. The respective adherents of Lord Rockingham and of the Earl of Shelburne, though they broke out into the most inveterate hostility as soon as they became masters of the Government, yet were impelled by one com-

mon leading object, that of terminating the contest with America, an object to which, under the circumstances of the time, the great majority of the nation fervently wished success. Lord North and Fox derived no support from popular favour. Their possession of power stood solely on two votes of the House of Commons. Nor could they claim any merit for having expelled a Ministry which, by ill success, disgraces, and losses of territory, was become unpopular or contemptible. Scarcely indeed did the Coalition venture to condemn the peace for having concluded which Lord Shelburne was nevertheless driven out of office. Indeed, it has always appeared doubtful to me whether the same majority which censured the treaties would have voted for removal of the First Minister who signed them. Lord North manifested much more firmness or pertinacity than was displayed by the Earl of Shelburne. It may perhaps be said that Lord North still retained, even down to the last day of his stay in office, a majority, though small, while Lord Shelburne was twice left in a minority. But the former nobleman, let it be recollected, had a long and an awful balance to adjust with Parliament, as well as with the people of England. Impeachments, prosecutions, nay, axes and scaffolds, had been held up before him who beheld an empire dissevered from Great Britain while he presided in the councils of the crown. The latter Minister had, on the contrary, witnessed scarcely any except prosperous events during his short Administration, which he had terminated by concluding peace. He therefore might, without any personal danger, have waited for more decided and affirmative testimonies of parliamentary condemnation before he gave in his resignation. Why he did not so act I will not presume to say; but I am convinced that if Mr. Pitt had

occupied Lord Shelburne's place in February 1783, he probably would have maintained himself in it, and finally have triumphed over the Coalition.

Among the persons of eminence who have "strutted their hour" under the reign of George III., and who about this time disappeared from the great public theatre, may be named General Sir John Irwine. His person, manners, and conversation were all made for the drawing-room, where he seemed to be in his native element. Though declining in life, yet his figure, tall, graceful, and dignified, set off by all the ornaments of dress, accompanied by a ribband and star, rendered him conspicuous in every company. He constantly reminded me of a marshal of France, such as they are described by St. Simon, under Louis XIV. His politeness, though somewhat formal, was nevertheless natural and captivating. Perhaps—at least so his enemies asserted—his military talents were not equally brilliant with his personal accomplishments; but he had not risen the more slowly on that account to the honours or to the eminences of his profession. While he was yet only a school-boy, his father, Lieutenant-General Irwine, gave him a company in his own regiment, leaving him subsequently a very good estate. Besides a regiment, the Sixth Dragoon Guards, and a government, both conferred on him by the crown, he had held during several years the post of Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, with very ample appointments and advantages. But no income, however large, could suffice for his expenses, which, being never restrained within any reasonable limits, finally involved him in irretrievable difficulties. The fact will hardly obtain belief that at one of the entertainments which he gave to the Lord Lieutenant in the year 1781 at Dublin, he displayed on the table, as the principal

piece in the dessert, a representation of the fortress of Gibraltar invested by the Spanish forces, executed in confectionery. It exhibited a faithful view of that celebrated rock so dear to the pride of the English nation, together with the works, batteries, and artillery of the besiegers, which threw sugar plumbs against the walls. The expense of this ostentatious piece of magnificence did not fall short of fifteen hundred pounds; and so incredible must the circumstance appear, that if I had not received the assurance of it from Lord Sackville, I should not venture to report it in these Memoirs.

The greatest intimacy subsisted between that nobleman and Sir John, who owed much of his advancement and success in life to the protection of Lionel, Duke of Dorset. Lord Sackville's disinterested friendship still continued to bring him into Parliament as his own colleague for East Grinstead after Irwine's return from Ireland, which took place on the dissolution of Lord North's Administration, down to his final departure from England. Decorated with the Order of the Bath, which then conferred much distinction, and of which he never failed to display the insignia whenever he went to the House of Commons, his personal appearance was imposing. Even of a morning, in his greatest undress, he wore a small star embroidered on his frock, without which he rarely appeared anywhere, and his travelling hussar cloaks bore the same brilliant badge of knighthood.<sup>1</sup> No man better knew the value of external figure aided by manner, and Philip, Earl of Chesterfield, himself had not more successfully studied the graces.<sup>2</sup> It was impossible

<sup>1</sup> An annotator, writing when this book originally came out, says, "When I was a boy, the knights of the different orders always wore their stars in undress."—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "All true. His brother, too, General Irwine, was very agreeable."—P.

to possess finer manners, without any affectation, or more perfect good-breeding. With such pretensions of person and of address, it cannot surprise that he attained to a great degree of favour at St. James's. The King considered and treated Irwine as a person whose conversation afforded him peculiar gratification. He often delighted to protract the discourse with a courtier whose powers of entertainment, however extensive, were always under the restraint of profound respect, and who never forgot the character of the prince whom he addressed even for a single moment. Irwine, though so fine a gentleman, loved all the indulgences of conviviality, in which gratifications he never restrained himself. The King, not unacquainted with these particulars, having said to him one day at the drawing-room, when conversing on his common mode of life, "They tell me, Sir John, that you love a glass of wine." "Those, sir, who have so reported of me to your Majesty," answered he, bowing profoundly, "have done me great injustice. They should have said a bottle."

Sir John Irwine's second wife, a daughter of the celebrated physician, Sir Edward Barry, who wrote with so much elegance and information on the "*Wines of the Ancients*," brought him no issue; but he afterwards contracted a third matrimonial connection. On his return to England, his debts became so numerous and his creditors so importunate, that though, as a member of Parliament, his person still remained secure, he found it impossible to reside longer with comfort in London. Quitting, therefore, privately his elegant house in Piccadilly, opposite the Green Park, he retired to the Continent, accompanied by his wife and two children. Landing in France, he hired a chateau in the province of Normandy, where his military rank and decorations

secured for him every testimony of respect from the surrounding gentry. He nevertheless soon experienced such pecuniary difficulties, that as he could nourish no hope of ever revisiting his native country, he removed over the Alps into Italy. The King, who sincerely regretted his departure from England, and who well knew the causes of it, often expressed his concern for Sir John Irwine's misfortunes, which he endeavoured to alleviate by sending Sir John the sum of £1000 from his privy purse, in two separate payments. I know this fact from the late Sir Charles Hotham, who was, I think, himself the channel through which his Majesty transmitted the first donation of £500. The second annual payment reached Parma on the morning of Sir John Irwine's decease. There he expired, towards the close of May 1788, where he enjoyed the favour, and even intimacy, of the Duke of Parma and the Archduchess Amelia, his consort. He had nearly attained his sixty-first year at the time of his death, and his characteristic habits of hospitality, accompanied with corresponding expense, distinguished him to the last moments of his career. While resident at Parma, he kept open house for all Englishmen of consideration who passed through the place, and only a few days previous to his decease he gave a ball and supper to the sovereigns of Parma. Yet all the authority of the Duke was vainly exerted to procure him the rites of Christian burial, it being opposed by the priests of that bigoted country. The remains of Sir John Irwine were privately conveyed by night, and deposited in the courtyard of a Protestant banker, the funeral service being read by an English gentleman, and the body being followed to the grave by the few individuals of the same nation who were then at Parma. Perhaps I ought here to add, that Sir John Irwine's widow and children



owed to the generous interposition and personal applications of the late Lord Melville, then Mr. Dundas, a pension which his Majesty granted them. Nor can I induce myself to omit, as it does the highest honour to that nobleman, that he obtained and forwarded to Lady Irwine the grant in question at a time when she had vainly solicited it from all the friends of her late husband, while Mr. Dundas was hardly known to him as a common acquaintance. Such acts demonstrate an enlarged and magnanimous mind.<sup>1</sup>

Lord John Cavendish, though he had negotiated and brought forward the loan necessary to be raised soon after he entered on office, yet did not propose the taxes which were to pay the interest of it until many weeks later in the session. He at length laid them before the House of Commons, where, on the whole, they appeared to meet with general approbation, and even attracted some encomiums. But Lord John, whose talents were not eminently adapted for the discussion of measures of finance, having stated his ways and means with tolerable precision, left the task of explaining and defending them principally to his associates in power. Fox and Lord North, who undertook it with great ability, repelled the comments made from the Opposition side of the House on the new taxes, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer, quitting his seat on the Treasury bench, retired during a considerable part of the debate behind the Speaker's chair, from which retreat he peeped out on either side as individuals rose for the purpose of approving or of censur-

<sup>1</sup> For these particulars, as well as for the correction of some errors into which I had fallen relative to Sir John Irwine, I am indebted to the lady of Captain Walker, of his Majesty's royal navy, Sir John's daughter, who obligingly favoured me with them under her hand.—WRAXALL.

ing his budget. Lord Mahon<sup>1</sup> attacked it with his characteristic impetuosity of voice and manner, accompanying his comments with most severe animadversions on Lord North's financial plans while he had remained at the head of the Treasury. Fox defended his colleague both with the arms of reason and of ridicule, which instantly brought forward Pitt. Between them the discussion was maintained with equal acrimony and ingenuity for a long time. Pitt not only repeated Lord Mahon's assertions relative to Lord North's taxes, which, he said, from their impolicy had generally frustrated their intended object, but added, "The present budget seems to be of a similar description. False or erroneous principles are assumed in order to support the measures adopted, which the people of England are expected to swallow as greedily as the champion of the people has uttered them with rapidity." Fox took his revenge on the whole Cabinet of the Earl of Shelburne collectively, whom he designated "as incapable of financial generation as it was possible for barrenness to be, having quitted their employments without leaving behind them a trace of any loan or taxes." Lord North directed the shafts of his wit principally against Lord Mahon, "whose abilities," he observed, "being so great without experience, must, when matured by time, render him a prodigy and an ornament to his country at the head of the Exchequer."

Lord John Cavendish performed only a subordinate part throughout the whole debate. His acknowledged purity of character when joined to his many private virtues, not to dwell on his high descent, rendered him universally an object of respect; and the advantage which his party derived from

<sup>1</sup> Charles, Lord Mahon, born 3d August 1753, married Lady Hester Pitt, eldest daughter of the great Earl of Chatham, 19th December 1774. He succeeded his father as third Earl Stanhope in 1786.—ED.

those qualities in the public estimation was incalculable. The nation even seemed silently to demand some such guarantee when the interests of the country were committed to a man of Fox's ruined fortune and dissipated habits of life. Pitt, it is true, who had been so recently placed at the head of the Exchequer, scarcely possessed more property than his rival; but the people of England knew how to discriminate between their respective pecuniary deficiency. Pitt, though not more distinguished by habits of economy than Fox, yet had not dissipated his small paternal fortune in any ostensible vices, while Fox, besides a landed estate and a lucrative office, both which he sold, had squandered an immense sum of ready money. Indeed, though Fox always appeared to me, whenever loans or budgets were discussed in Parliament, to display a capacity for arithmetical calculation, and all the talents requisite for a Minister of finance, scarcely if at all inferior to Pitt's ability in that line, yet I believe it never occurred to any man's mind to place Fox in the control of the Treasury or of the Exchequer at any period of his life. Almost as well might Henry V. have placed Falstaff there.<sup>1</sup> Fox himself seemed not to emulate a higher post in the Cabinet than Secretary of State, always interposing Lord John Cavendish in the guardianship of the public money. Nor could the British people confide their interests to more incorruptible integrity than distinguished the Chancellor of the Exchequer, but he could not sustain the slightest comparison with Pitt, nor even with Lord North, in the powers of his mind and understanding, or in his parliamentary talents and knowledge of business.

<sup>1</sup> Falstaff says to Prince Henry, "Rob me the Exchequer the first thing thou doest, and do it with unwashed hands too" (*1 Henry IV.*, act iii. sc. 3).—ED.

[*2d and 3d June 1783.*] The parliamentary prosecution instituted against Sir Thomas Rumbold continued to languish rather than to advance towards any consummation throughout the whole session. Nevertheless, at this time, the evidence in his defence being closed, Dundas rose and moved that the proceedings should not be discontinued either by a prorogation or a dissolution of Parliament. This motion, which was intended to be accompanied with a bill for restraining Rumbold from quitting the kingdom or from alienating his property till the final decision of the inquiry, gave rise to much difference of opinion. Sawbridge, Lord Nugent, and various other members, though by no means partial to the accused person, yet declared that they considered the whole business as unconstitutional and oppressive. Rigby, near two months earlier, when the subject was agitated in the House, had not hesitated to stigmatise it with epithets of condemnation and derision. Accustomed to speak his sentiments on every topic with a blunt and overbearing as well as dictatorial tone, "This assembly," observed he, "is acting in a capacity partly legislative, partly judicial. We are now performing the functions of a judge, and for aught I see we may have to do the office of hangman." On the present occasion he treated the motion in a similar manner. "We are asked," said he, "to continue the bill in existence, even after a dissolution of Parliament. What! are we to bind 558 other individuals to abide by and to adopt the evidence which we alone have heard? The proposition excites ridicule."

Rumbold himself, addressing the House, made a very forcible and pathetic appeal to their feelings, no less than to their justice, and he was heard with great attention. In language of energy he

depicted his sufferings, deprecated all further delay, implored the House for their own honour and dignity to accelerate the conclusion; cited *Magna Charta*, the bulwark of our liberties, where it is expressly declared that the subject shall experience no delay of justice, and protested that whatever might prove their decision, he would not shrink from it. Nor did he omit to remark in how different a manner Burke, who was one of his ardent prosecutors, had conducted himself towards Powell and Bembridge, men accused like himself, but not proved to be criminal. Lord North, though he voted for the motion (probably more from consideration for his new allies than from inclination), yet agreed with Rigby in opinion that one Parliament could not bind another, still less could the present House of Commons who heard the evidence legislate for their successors, and compel them to decide on that evidence. The Solicitor-General, Lee, a man of upright principles, though of rude and repulsive manners, who had uniformly disapproved the whole proceedings, declared that he could perceive no reason for changing his opinion relative to them, and therefore, as far as his individual vote extended, he would never consent to retain Rumbold under the terrors of a restraining Act. Nevertheless, as Pitt and Fox, Dundas and Burke, who rarely concurred on any point, agreed on this subject, leave was given to bring in the bill, but its features were softened down by the Lord Advocate when he presented it next day. Sir Thomas's personal property remained no longer tied up, only his landed estate at Woodhall in the county of Hertford being rendered responsible, and he was permitted to quit the kingdom, from which exercise of his freedom he had been previously interdicted. At this point terminated the pro-

secution, which may be said to have died of a political atrophy.

While the Rockingham party during many years had been excluded from office, they loudly declaimed against abuses of every description, particularly against the extravagant expenditure of the public money in various departments. Nor during the very short period that the Treasury was under their control, which did not exceed three months, can it be denied that they endeavoured to manifest the sincerity of their engagements. Burke, who stood forward in the invidious character of a reformer, acquired no inconsiderable merit with the country at large by his exertions to reduce exorbitant demands or to abolish obsolete and overgrown establishments of every kind. But with Lord Rockingham's life these efforts wholly ceased. From the period of their union with Lord North, when they began confidently to count on a quiet possession of power and emolument, at least for a few years, in consequence of their strength in both Houses of Parliament, they seemed to have greatly relaxed in the severity of their political principles. Above all, they manifested a decided aversion to any reforms which did not originate with themselves, and which were not subjected to their own Ministerial control. A striking exemplification of this fact presented itself before the end of the session.

Pitt, who watched all their conduct and canvassed all their measures with jealous as well as unremitting attention, having brought forward a bill to establish regulations in the fees, perquisites, and other emoluments received in most of the public offices, instead of finding any support from the other side of the House, as might naturally have been expected, met with the warmest opposition in that quarter. Lord John Cavendish possessed indeed

a mind too ingenuous altogether to dispute the utility of the objects proposed, and therefore contented himself with partially and indirectly resisting the plan; but Fox and Burke loaded the bill, its author, and the Administration of which he had lately composed a part, with the severest epithets or imputations. One of the topics on which they commonly exhausted their ridicule and contempt was the speech pronounced from the throne at the opening of the session. This composition they affected to consider as a mass of unmeaning promises, either in themselves improper to be reduced to practice, or never intended for any purpose except delusion. Pitt, therefore, had in view to rescue the Administration in which he had occupied a distinguished place from charges so injurious, and when he introduced the measure, he observed that it would prove "his Majesty's speech was not full of mere empty profession, but, on the contrary, the Ministers of that period, if they had continued in power, were determined to have carried every part of it into effect." Burke, indignant, and accustomed during many years to treat Lord North, while plunged in the embarrassments of the American war, with language of great asperity, did not sufficiently recollect with how different an antagonist he now had to contend. Rising in one of those paroxysms of anger to which he was subject, he exclaimed that "the conduct of the late Cabinet must be exposed, for which purpose he should move to lay certain papers on the table. The House," added he, "will then have at once displayed before them the plans of pretended reform contrasted with the practices of abuse. From the comparison it may be ascertained whether the speech in question was not a parade of profession and promise, while their measures were full of criminality." Expressions so strong were not

allowed by Pitt to pass without instant animadversion. "Let the question between us," replied he, "be brought to an immediate test, and a full inquiry set on foot. The right honourable gentleman best knows whether bringing forward plans of theoretical reform and committing practical abuses in office do or do not meet in the same person." It was impossible to mistake the allusion to Powell and Bembridge. Not a word of reply being uttered from the Treasury bench, Pitt's bill of regulation experienced no further opposition on that evening.

[17th June 1783.] As it advanced, however, through the subsequent stages, every species of indirect hostility was manifested towards it, Lord John Cavendish himself representing it as useless or unnecessary; though Pitt, after entering into all the details of its operation, declared his firm conviction that it would save the public at least forty thousand pounds a year. Fox repeated the words used by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to which Burke added that the bill held out the reverse of true economical reform, substituting in its place only vexation and expense. Some of the comparisons and allusions made by Burke in particular, reflecting contemptuously on Pitt as a projector and a reformer, appeared, when falling from his lips, to affect his audience with no little surprise, he having so recently himself laid claim to general approbation in the same character. As it might, nevertheless, have seemed too indecorous not to permit the bill to pass the House of Commons, Ministers allowed it to go up to the Peers; but there the whole force of Government drew out in array against the measure. Even the Duke of Portland, who seldom exhibited any specimens of eloquence, stigmatised it as "more a disease than a remedy;" while Lord Fitzwilliam decried it as being both



trifling and vexatious in its nature. Thus attacked, the measure was finally negatived. Such a repugnance demonstrated to the very objects of retrenchment which they had themselves affected to introduce only a few months before with so much zeal, even into the palace and at the table of the sovereign, evidently because they were now proposed from a hostile source, did not fail to make an adequate impression on the public mind. It operated to the disadvantage of the Ministry in every quarter of the kingdom, and, by unmasking them, in some measure it silently prepared the way for those astonishing events in the interior of the Government which took place before the conclusion of the year.

Some of the abuses which Pitt had attempted to point out and expose in the progress of the bill which he introduced into the House of Commons, were indeed of a description so singular as to excite not only astonishment, but even to produce a degree of ridicule. They served to show what extensive depredations had been committed upon the public in many or in all the principal offices previous to the period of Lord North's resignation. That nobleman formed the mark at which Pitt levelled his severest censures, nor could the House altogether refrain from laughter at one of the charges, specifying a sum of £340 paid to the Secretary of the Treasury for the article of whipcord. The annual expense of the First Minister for his individual stationery, under which denomination was, however, included the whipcord, did not fall short, as it appeared, of £1300. Lord North, when called on, made, nevertheless, not only a plausible, but a very satisfactory defence to most of the alleged items. Relative to the consumption of whipcord, which had excited a great deal of mirth, having professed at the same time his total ignorance, Robin-

son undertook to give some sort of explanation, which, however ingenious or even well founded it might be, yet diverted more than it satisfied his hearers.

It is certain that during the period antecedent to 1782 the abuses practised in many great official departments, which exceeded all reasonable limits, loudly demanded parliamentary regulation. I have myself had occasion to hear, if not to see, specimens and instances of depredation (for they well merited the name) which will hardly obtain belief in the present day. I knew with some degree of intimacy a Lord of Trade who, possessing a borough and a very large fortune, was himself a member of the House of Commons in successive Parliaments. On his being sworn in at the Board of Trade, he issued an order to provide a great number of pewter inkstands for his own use, which he afterwards commuted into one composed of silver. I have seen him at the levée dressed in a suit of green velvet fabricated, as fame reported, out of the materials ordered in his public character for the ostensible purpose of making bags to contain office papers. His friends and correspondents could recognise the stationery, of which he had made an ample provision, more than ten years after the Board of Trade itself, abolished by Burke's bill, had ceased to have any existence. Even since 1782 similar facts are said to have taken place. One in particular, committed as late as 1807 by a person of very high rank, afforded subject of derision to the print-shops of the metropolis. The gentleman to whom I have previously alluded, or rather his wife, stood on the list of British peerages intended to have been either revived or created by Lord North and Fox, the number of which, as I recollect, amounted to thirty-two or thirty-three, if the Coalition had forced their

way a second time into the Cabinet in the beginning of 1784, as they confidently expected.

Nor were these the only official and Ministerial appropriations of the public money to private purposes that distinguished the times under our review. From the Ministry of Sir Robert Walpole down to the conclusion of Lord North's Government, few places of considerable emolument in any department were given wholly unfettered to the nominal occupant. Even under Lord Rockingham's first Administration in 1765 we find Wilkes quartered on the whole of the Treasury and Admiralty Boards to the annual amount of £1040 a year, the Marquis paying him £500, the inferior Lords of the Treasury £60 each, and the members of the Board of Trade each £40. This curious fact is stated in Horne's letter to "Junius" of the 31st July 1771. It was not attempted to be denied. When the Duke of Grafton in June of the same year, 1771, accepted the office of Privy Seal, which had been previously destined for Lord Weymouth, "Junius" more than insinuates that the last-mentioned nobleman was quartered by the Duke upon Rigby, who from 1768 to 1782 nominally occupied the sole Paymastership of the Forces. I knew a lady of quality, who having been daughter to a person very high in office, was commonly said to have *rode* sixteen persons at one time, to whom her father had given places under that express condition or reservation. I believe she outlived them all. West India governments, military appointments, offices in the excise and customs, in a word, places of every description at home and abroad were frequently loaded with riders.

I remember about the very time of which I am now speaking (in July 1783), when the bill for regulating the offices in the Exchequer was before

the House of Commons, Hussey, enumerating the abuses practised, asked, "Have Ministers never heard of quartering one person upon another? Will they venture to assert that at this moment no individual ostensibly out of place is quartered upon the salary of some man in employment? I mean no imputation on the present Government. Such practices, I believe, have prevailed under all Administrations during many years." Neither Fox nor Lord North, though both the one and the other rose to speak during the course of the evening, attempted to contest Hussey's assertion. Pitt himself, when introducing the bill to which allusion has been recently made, recapitulated many alienations of public money which were then practised, but which we can scarcely credit in the present times. In the Navy Office, where no fees were allowed, and where, under that name, they were disclaimed, the chief clerk, whose salary did not exceed £250 a year, received in gifts annually full £2500. Game of every description was sent up to the Secretary of the General Post Office in Lombard Street, as a sort of feudal homage or tribute throughout the season from the provincial postmasters scattered over the kingdom. The Lords of the Treasury were accustomed to appoint their own servants to the place of stampers in the Stamp Office, instantly granting them leave of absence, so that the duty was performed by deputy. Not only coals and candles, but even articles of furniture were ordered by persons in high employment, to be sent, at the public expense, to their houses both in London and in the country. The royal dockyards presented facts equally demanding reform. Pitt declared that the annual aggregate charge on account of stationery wares exceeded £18,000, adding that he had

heard of apartments being papered at the expense of the public. I feel it, however, incumbent on me to state that Lord North made not only the most explicit and dignified reply to these allegations, as far as they regarded himself personally or officially, but demonstrated his own disinterestedness while at the head of affairs. "When I was placed," said he, "in the control of the Treasury, I found that my predecessors had invariably been supplied with coals and candles at the public expense, according to ancient established usage. Nevertheless I did not avail myself of the practice, however confirmed by length of time, but purchased those articles out of my own purse." He subjoined, "I not only took every precaution in order to prevent fraud from being committed in my name, but I assure the House I will make the most rigorous inquiries, and if I discover delinquency, I will leave nothing undone to bring the offenders to punishment." All these modes of augmenting the fair income or salary of office were extinguished, as I know, by Pitt when he became First Minister, not only in the Treasury and Exchequer, but throughout every department of the revenue as far as his influence extended. Unfortunately he was necessitated in many cases to commit a greater inroad on the constitution by distributing honours and dignities as a substitute for emoluments.

[25th and 26th June 1783.] Notwithstanding the ascendant which Fox exercised over the Cabinet, and in particular over the Chancellor of the Exchequer, an event occurred at this time where his influence proved unequal to overcome the obstacles opposed to it. The Prince of Wales approaching the period of his minority, a separate establishment became requisite for him, and Carlton House, which had not been inhabited

since the decease of the Princess Dowager of Wales in 1772, was chosen to constitute his future residence. The income proper for his Royal Highness's support became necessarily a subject of discussion among the members of Administration, and produced great difference of opinion. Fox thought that the annual sum of £100,000 would not be more than adequate to maintain his state, while Lord John Cavendish, in whose immediate official department the business lay, conceived that a moiety of the sum might suffice, under the circumstances of the country and the incumbrances on the Civil List. His Majesty being of the latter sentiment, it was adopted, and Lord John having acquainted the House with the gracious determination of the sovereign not to call on his people for any additional aid to his Civil List, but to take on himself the present expense of the heir-apparent, limited his demand to the sum of £60,000, as a temporary supply to the crown and an outfit. Pitt instantly stood up, and having expressed his perfect approbation of the proposition, as by no means unreasonable or excessive, he passed some very high encomiums on the Prince. Then, addressing his discourse pointedly to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, he observed that rumours had been circulated, in a manner which seemed to stamp them with authenticity, of a very extraordinary nature. "Those rumours," continued he, "asserted that it had been the intention of some of the King's Ministers, contrary to his Majesty's avowed wishes, whose paternal affection for his subjects suggested very different ideas to his royal mind, as well as contrary to a due consideration for the exhausted condition of the country, to have proposed a very enormous sum for the Prince of Wales's establishment. I rejoice exceedingly at finding those reports practically done away on this

evening; but I trust that Ministers will take the present occasion to rise in their places and to deny that there ever existed the slightest foundation for such assertions. On so important a point I expect that they will furnish us with an ample explanation."

Fox, thus called on, rose, and, in the manly tone which always characterised him, replied, that as the vote now proposed went only to the sum of £50,000 a year, that fact formed in itself a sufficient answer to the question. But he added that "former Princes of Wales had received larger grants from Parliament for the support of their dignity." Having expatiated with equal eloquence and warmth of colouring on the eminent as well as shining virtues of the Prince, not omitting the merit of his ready obedience on the present occasion to his Majesty's pleasure, the Secretary added, "If, however, it had remained with me to advise, or had it been my province to make the application of this day to the House, I do not hesitate to repeat that I should have asked for a much larger sum. But as the person who possesses the best right to decide upon that point has not coincided with me in sentiment, it becomes my duty to obey, and to act implicitly by his opinion." The vote then passed without a dissentient voice, but on the following day, when the report was made from the Committee of Supply, Governor Johnstone resumed the subject. It required all the strength of nerve which he possessed not to be deterred from touching upon a topic so delicate in itself, necessarily exposing the individual who agitated it to a variety of unpleasant circumstances. Without, however, suffering these considerations to influence his conduct, Johnstone, after expressing his satisfaction at the resolution of the preceding evening, observed that it appeared the obligation was solely due to his Majesty for taking

the allowance now made to the Prince of Wales out of the Civil List, as well as for limiting to the sum of £60,000 the aid demanded of Parliament on the present occasion. "The Ministers of the crown," continued he, "cannot lay claim to the slightest degree of merit from the alleviation thus effected in the burdens to be imposed upon the people. Much praise has, indeed, been bestowed by them on the Prince of Wales for submitting to so limited a provision, but not a syllable has fallen from their lips in praise of the King, who is the author of this meritorious transaction. I readily admit his Royal Highness's high merit; not, however, because the grant is in itself too small or inadequate, but because, from the expressions and avowal of the Secretary of State, the Prince has been encouraged to imagine that double the sum ought to have been given him, independent of the Civil List or of his father, arising from a vote of Parliament, to be settled on himself."—"His Majesty's Ministers are most reprehensible thus to recommend it in the deed and to blast it in the act, insinuating in the plainest manner their desire to have granted his Royal Highness double the provision, at the same time informing us that the present proposition emanates solely from the sovereign, whose will on the present point they were unable to control."—"The actual allowance of £50,000 a year, with £12,000 more issuing from the revenues of Cornwall and of Wales, constitute as ample an establishment for an unmarried heir-apparent as a country pressed down by war and taxation can with propriety bestow."

Fox having manifested some marks of contempt, or rather of levity, at the last expression uttered by Johnstone, the Governor exclaimed, "I well know, Mr. Speaker, that the largest sums appear as mites to the Secretary of State, who is accustomed to



set at defiance all ideas of moderation in his own personal expenses, and who has now adopted the present desperate expedient for supplying his profusion and his ambition. To his Majesty alone we owe the proposition before us, and no persons are in general more lavish of encomiums on the sovereign than the members of Administration when they mean to assume to themselves the merit of those acts. No such commendations have been now bestowed on the King, who is indirectly censured for granting so small a pittance to his son. Delicacy ought to have restrained Ministers from expressing such sentiments in this assembly while they think proper to occupy their official employments. By sullenly refusing to explain whether they will not soon call on us for further pecuniary assistance to the Prince, they even encourage him to incur debts which must ultimately be liquidated by Parliament." A speech so abounding with offensive personalities, it might naturally have been expected, would call up the Secretary of State, who seldom remained silent under similar attacks. Nevertheless, the whole Treasury bench sat mute, and the House rose immediately ; but throughout the whole proceeding Fox undoubtedly appeared rather in the character of a friend and adherent of the heir to the throne than as a confidential servant and a Cabinet Minister of George III. Pitt, even while at the head of Opposition, seemed to act more in the latter capacity.

I ought however, in justice to say, that his parliamentary conduct during the whole period of the Coalition Administration displayed neither an illiberal, a vindictive, nor an undistinguishing resistance to Ministerial measures. On the contrary, he supported Government on more than one occasion, when a factious member of Parliament might have

acquired popularity by an opposite line of action. I could cite instances in proof of my assertion. In the list of taxes enumerated by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and brought forward as part of his ways and means, was one imposing a small stamp on receipts. This tax, which experienced great obstacles from various parts of the House, excited much clamour, but Pitt refused to lend himself to it, and declared his determination to give the bill his strenuous support. Among the favourite objects of the Shelburne Ministry might be justly reckoned the steps taken for compelling public accountants to pay in their balances of national money. Powis having about this time demanded whether Administration was occupied on a subject so important to the state, and Kenyon following up the question by asking if the bill filed against Powell as one of the executors of the late Lord Holland, but which had been suspended by Powell's tragical death, was about to be prosecuted, the Solicitor-General, Lee, rose in reply. With the sincerity and independence of his natural character, disdaining all circumlocution, he answered that "he never would revive the bill to the extent of the former, which Powell's end had arrested." "The old bill," subjoined he, "reclaimed all the interest ever made by Lord Holland while Paymaster of the Forces out of the public money in his possession. I hold this measure to be so oppressive as well as unjust, so contrary to long-established usage, and of a nature which would occasion such apprehensions among all the descendants of former Paymasters, that I will rather resign my office than consent to countenance it."

Fox did not let pass the occasion thus offered him of justifying his father's memory at the expense of the late Administration. "My noble relation," observed he, "was the only Paymaster of

the Forces, whom those Ministers selected for the purpose of exacting from his executors sums which, if extorted, must reduce his family to beggary. For what was their demand? The interest, not of money withheld from the public after it had been reclaimed by Government, but the whole accumulated gain made by Lord Holland while at the head of the Pay Office. This was a prosecution which, if the situation in which I personally stood with respect to the last Cabinet be considered, looked very much like persecution." Anxious probably to efface such an imputation, thrown on the individuals with whom he was so closely connected, Pitt instantly stood up and declared that he did not think interest of the retrospective and comprehensive nature described ought to be demanded by the public; but he justified the late Attorney-General, Kenyon, for having laid claim to it on the part of the country, as that law-officer conceived it to be his duty. Adding, "an Attorney-General ought not to exercise his discretion on such a point, or to leave unclaimed any supposed right of the crown." Burke, however, starting up, exclaimed, "Precisely on the same ground might the iniquitous Ministers of Henry VII., Empson and Dudley, be defended!" Here the matter terminated.

[10th July 1783.] The fruitless attempt made by Pitt to regulate the abuses of fees in the public offices did not constitute the only unsuccessful parliamentary effort undertaken by him during the session. A short time before its close, Lord John Cavendish, as it would appear, somewhat incautiously or inadvertently laid on the table a book containing the list of public accountants to whom sums of money, exceeding in the whole forty-four millions, had been issued by Government, for which they had never passed any accounts before the auditors of the im-

prest. Pitt, instantly availing himself of this disclosure, endeavoured to induce the House to vote an address to the crown requesting his Majesty to take measures for compelling the persons named to account for those sums, and for preventing a future recurrence of the same abuse. He seemed authorised to assume that such a motion would be too analogous to the avowed disposition and professions of the Rockingham party to experience from them any resistance. All the ability, eloquence, wit, and ingenuity of the Ministerial benches were, nevertheless, called out in order to invalidate the authenticity of the very document laid by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the table, which book his colleagues now declared to be destitute of proper authority, and consequently an unsafe as well as inefficient basis on which to found the proposed address to the throne.

This treatment of Lord John in his official capacity as Minister of finance by his own friends, in the face of the House of Commons, did not appear at first sight either the most respectful to him, or even the most decorous to themselves. Sheridan, with consummate address, contrived, however, to render it in some measure palatable by a delicate mixture of compliment to his integrity and of censure on his prudence; while Lord North and Fox played their whole artillery upon Pitt. The two Secretaries of State seemed on that day to act in perfect concert, and to be cordially united. To Fox the motion was, indeed, one of deep interest, his father standing on the list nominally for twelve out of the forty-four millions which had not been formally passed by the auditors of the imprest, though it seemed to be generally admitted that the money issued to Lord Holland was substantially accounted for by that nobleman's executors. Fox

objected in strong terms to the assertion of any specific sum remaining unaccounted for in the Exchequer, and indirectly accused Pitt of meaning to implicate Lord Holland by the proposed vote as a defaulter. "The right honourable gentleman," added he, "has probably the same intentions as those individuals manifested who, when my noble relation had in his hands about four hundred thousand pounds of the public money, called him the defaulter of unaccounted millions." Nor was the Secretary less severe on his colleague, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, than Sheridan had been, blaming Lord John's injudicious candour in producing a document of which so injurious a use had been made by the Opposition. Having finally expunged the most essential clauses of the proposed address to the throne, Ministers allowed it to pass the House.

[16th July 1783.] The session, protracted to the middle of July, now drew towards a termination. During the space of about three months that Parliament remained sitting after the formation of the new Ministry, both Houses, and in particular the Commons, had manifested the utmost disposition to give them every support. The Opposition, though conducted by Pitt and Dundas, while it was tacitly as well as powerfully sustained by Jenkinson, yet rarely ventured on a division which only exposed the paucity and inferiority of their numbers. Lord North, however obscured he might be by the superior energy of Fox, still remained the nominal leader of a very numerous body, who looked to him for protection against the violent members of the Rockingham party; but his colleague, without the title, was already become the real First Minister, as the great Earl of Chatham had been formerly under the late and present reign, when only Secretary of State

or when holding the Privy Seal. The strength of Fox's character, the activity of his mind, the warmth of his friendship, and the splendour of his talents,—this combination of endowments naturally attracting adherents, enabled him to absorb the whole power of Government. Burke, ardent, indefatigable, and never losing sight of his object, impatiently looked forward to the great task of reforming and remodelling India. The advanced season of the year at which the Administration came into power, and that circumstance only, had induced Fox, as well as his colleagues, to allow the present session to elapse without immediately availing themselves of the patronage and multiplied sources of advantage which the Indian Empire offered to their avidity. It presented a rich harvest which they devoured by anticipation, and the enjoyment of which they reluctantly postponed even for a few months. But the magnitude, importance, and complicated nature of the political machine by which India was governed demanded mature deliberation before they ventured to reconstruct it, as they meditated, entirely on new principles. It was therefore finally determined in the Cabinet to call Parliament together early in the approaching autumn for the purpose, and the King was expressly made to declare the intention in his speech pronounced from the throne on the prorogation. Sheridan, by a wonderful combination of almost all the talents which can meet in man, under the control of unalterable equality of temper, began already to compete with Burke in parliamentary estimation, and frequently obtained a more ready or patient hearing from the House. Every day, while it confirmed the ascendant which he had there acquired, placed him higher among the most distinguished supporters of Administration.

If the Coalition looked round at home, they beheld

at this period a docile Parliament, originally called together by Lord North, and of which assembly he still retained in his hands many of the secret springs or keys in both Houses. Abroad everything announced the continuance of peace. America was indeed lost; but the emancipated colonies had ceased to be hostile to Great Britain. France, exhausted even by her late advantages beyond the Atlantic, weak in her government, and altogether convulsed or deranged in her finances, already nourished in her vitals the seeds of that revolution which has since overturned order, religion, and monarchy among the French, while it convulsed the ancient fabric of Europe. Joseph II., Emperor of Germany, suppressed monasteries and religious establishments with one hand; with the other, in direct violation of all subsisting treaties, rashly and wantonly demolished to their foundations the works of the garrison cities of the Austrian Netherlands. I witnessed myself during the course of that summer the expulsion of the last remains of the Dutch troops maintained in the barrier towns, and the destruction or demolition of the fortifications themselves. Except Luxembourg, placed at one extremity towards Germany, and the citadel of Antwerp, situate at the other termination of Flanders, it was obvious that scarcely any obstacle remained to exclude France from overrunning the Low Countries at her pleasure. If these reflections appeared, however, to cause no uneasiness to Ministers, yet a domestic source of just anxiety, which they could not surmount, presented itself in the fixed and unconquerable alienation of the King. In vain did they endeavour to insinuate themselves into his personal favour. He received with formality and coldness all their advances; allowed them to dictate measures; gave them audiences, signed papers, and complied with their advice;

but he neither admitted them to his confidence nor ceased to consider them as objects of his individual aversion. The consciousness of this sentiment existing in the royal bosom, which sunk deep into Fox's mind, naturally impelled him to substitute other foundations on which to construct and to perpetuate his Ministerial greatness.

No man who has enjoyed the opportunities of studying Fox's character, or of being informed respecting his political line of action, to which I have had access, can, however, doubt that he would have preferred gentleness before force, and conciliation in preference to harsher methods of confirming his power, if the means of accomplishing it had been open to him. He well knew how difficult it was to retain office in defiance of the sovereign; and he could not be ignorant that by his junction with Lord North, though he had stormed the Cabinet, he had lost his popularity.<sup>1</sup> All his original principles were monarchical, and even his ambition partook of the pliability of his nature. His very necessities rendered him ductile, and loudly called on him to bestow some attention on his private fortune. In fact, we may question whether a more complying Minister, or one more disposed to have gratified his master in every legitimate object of royal desire, could have been found among His Majesty's subjects. Pitt manifested by no means the same acquiescence, or the same suavity and ready submission on a variety of occasions, when afterwards in office. He was, on the contrary, often intractable and pertinacious, as I know, even upon points painfully interesting to the King. But if George III. did not regard him with affection, he at least considered him with esteem; and, unfortunately for Fox, it was not

<sup>1</sup> Lord John Townshend, in a letter to the late Lord Holland (1830), declares that the Coalition gradually grew in popular favour.—D.



easy to acquire the favour of the sovereign except through the channel of his moral approbation. "*Hoc fonte derivata clades.*" It was in vain that the Secretary watched for a moment of weakness, of which he would no doubt have profited, to insinuate himself into the royal confidence. There existed no mistress to facilitate his approaches, to soften asperities, and to form the medium of reconciliation. Under George I., the Duchess of Kendal or the Countess of Darlington would have performed that office for him, though not gratuitously, as Mrs. Howard<sup>1</sup> or Madame de Walmoden<sup>2</sup> would equally have done with George II.

Nor can we reasonably question, on the other hand, that his Majesty justly appreciated the Secretary's character, and was well aware that he would not prove more intractable or rigid while in office than other men; but he did not choose to avail himself of such assistance. I know that some three or four years after the time of which I now speak, the King, finding himself alone with the Duke of Queensberry, who had been one of the Lords of his Bedchamber ever since his accession to the crown, and with whom he was accustomed to converse unreservedly on many subjects, the discourse turned on the Coalition Ministry. "Sir," said the Duke, "your Majesty might safely have allowed Mr. Fox to remain in office, and you would have found in him every disposition to comply with your wishes. I can assert as an undoubted fact that there was scarcely any proof of his personal devotion, or any sacrifice that he would not have made, to acquire your favour." "He never said as much to me," answered the King. "No, sir," replied the Duke, "assuredly he did not, because your Majesty never gave him any encouragement to venture on taking

<sup>1</sup> Countess of Suffolk.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Countess of Yarmouth.—ED.

such a step." George III., during the eight or nine months of his captivity, only looked to emancipation, and never attempted to gain or to conciliate his Ministerial jailors.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, emerging, as the duties of his high office compelled him, from the dissipation and society of Brookes's, Fox, during this brilliant but transitory portion of his life, fulfilled with universal approbation, I might even say admiration, all the essential no less than the ostensible functions of Secretary of State. At his house in Grafton Street, where he resided, he received and entertained the foreign Ministers then resident in London from the various European courts with distinguished *éclat*. They, who were never weary of his conversation, respected his talents while they admired the immense variety of his information on all diplomatic points. Delighted at the facility with which he wrote or conversed in French, an accomplishment not so general at that time as it is now become,<sup>2</sup> they were not less gratified by the liberal hospitality of his table, added to the noble amenity and frankness of his manners. Nor can it be sufficiently regretted that a man so much formed to have done honour and to have rendered essential service to his country as Fox should, by the errors or imprudences of his own conduct, have rendered himself obnoxious to his sovereign, and thus have excluded himself from office. We cannot reflect without concern that in the course of a life prolonged to its fifty-eighth year Fox sat only about nineteen months in the Cabinet, taken altogether; while Pitt, who terminated his

<sup>1</sup> He rendered justice to Fox by saying that at all events *he* was a gentleman, and that it was, so far, never disagreeable to transact business with him.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> "I was surprised to find Mr. Fox's correspondence with Monsieur Talleyrand *not* written in the very best French."—*Simond's Tour in Great Britain*, 1810.—ED.

comparatively short career at forty-seven, passed almost his whole life after he attained to manhood in the first employments, or rather in the highest situation of state—that of Prime Minister. However we may dispute as to the superiority of talents in these two extraordinary and illustrious men, posterity will be at no loss to decide respecting the superiority of their judgment.

[*August 1783.*] Pitt, availing himself of this interval of political leisure afforded him by the triumph of the Coalition and the recess of Parliament, endeavoured to catch a hasty glimpse of the Continent, which he had scarcely ever before visited. As if he foresaw that no other occasion would ever again present itself for the gratification of his curiosity, he crossed over to Calais and directed his course in the first instance to Rheims. Lord Thurlow followed his example. George Rose,<sup>1</sup> who had been one of the two Secretaries of the Treasury during the period when Pitt filled the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and who has since deservedly risen by his distinguished financial talents or services to much higher official situations, accompanied Lord Thurlow. I met them by accident at Antwerp.<sup>2</sup> Pitt proceeding afterwards to Paris, was presented

<sup>1</sup> George Rose ascended by power of industry and ability from the modest position of an apothecary's apprentice to be President of the Board of Trade, which office he held at the period of his death in 1818, then nearly seventy years of age. His name is honourably connected with various useful literary works. He was an optimist in the most adverse of times, and when England was writhing beneath calamities and oppressions, ever maintained that she was "on a bed of roses." Moore alludes to his being a "pluralist" in the words of a hungry guest—

"Old Georgy is late,  
But come lay the tablecloth; zounds! do not wait,  
Nor stop to inquire, while the dinner is staying,  
At which of his places old Rose is delaying."—D.

<sup>2</sup> This was a mistake according to the *Quarterly Review*, vol. xxv. p. 211. Pitt never was at Antwerp.—ED.

by our ambassador, the Duke of Manchester, to Louis XVI. at Fontainebleau, where the French court always passed a considerable portion of the autumn. His name and the fame of his distinguished abilities, which had preceded his appearance, disposed all to admire him; but the King, in compliance with the stupid etiquette that interdicted him from speaking to foreigners who were presented at court, when added to his natural shyness, did not, I believe, exchange one word with Pitt. The Queen, whose superior energy of mind emancipated her from such restraints, treated him with the utmost distinction. Marie Antoinette entered into conversation with him, as far as his cold manner, increased by an imperfect knowledge of the French language, would permit him to engage in discourse. "Monsieur," said she to him, on his retiring with a manner even more expressive than the words, "*je suis charmée de vous voir, et de vous avoir vue.*" Pitt took care to return to London from his short excursion in time to attend the meeting of Parliament.

While two leaders of the Ministry and of Opposition were thus respectively occupied, the one in his official duties at home and the other on the Continent, the King became a prey to habitual dejection. Throughout all the troubles of his reign, when Wilkes and when "Junius" excited disaffection among his subjects, as well as during the most distressful periods of the American war, or when the capital exhibited scenes of outrage and of popular violence, he had maintained a serene countenance and manifested an unshaken firmness. But his fortitude sunk under the bondage to which the Coalition had subjected him. His natural equality of temper, suavity of manners, and cheerfulness of deportment forsaking him in a great measure, he

became silent, thoughtful, taciturn, and uncommunicative.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, when he resided at Windsor, mounting his horse, accompanied by an equerry and a single footman, after riding ten or twelve miles, scarcely opening his lips, he would dismount in order to inspect his hounds or to view his farming improvements; then getting on horseback again, he returned back to the Queen's Lodge in the same pensive or disconsolate manner. From time to time he admitted Jenkinson and Lord Thurlow, as Privy Councillors, to pay their respects to him. He even repeated to the latter of those distinguished persons his wish, already expressed, of visiting his Electoral dominions for a few months, abandoning to the Ministers during his absence the power of which they had got possession. But Lord Thurlow, after again dissuading him from having recourse to any strong or violent expedients for procuring present emancipation, exhorted him to wait for a favourable occasion, which Fox's impetuosity or imprudence would probably furnish, to liberate himself from the yoke of the Coalition. Time soon presented the propitious moment for putting this advice into execution.

[*September 1783.*] His Majesty remaining inflexible in his resolution not to create any British peers on the Ministerial recommendation, they contented themselves with tendering him a list of eight or nine Irish peerages.<sup>2</sup> However reluctantly, he yet consented to exercise this act of the prerogative. Nearly about the same time, the definitive treaties of peace were concluded with France and Spain; while David Hartley,<sup>3</sup> who had been sent to Paris ex-

<sup>1</sup> He now often wished himself "eighty or ninety, or dead."—D.

<sup>2</sup> At this period very few British peerages were conferred in the first instance. Pitt himself usually was content with making an Irish batch.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> David Hartley, son of the celebrated philosopher, born in 1730.

pressly for the purpose, signed another treaty with America. Hartley, who was member for Hull, though destitute of any personal recommendations of manner, possessed some talent, with unsullied probity, added to indefatigable perseverance and labour. His sight, which was very defective, compelled him always to wear spectacles. The Rockingham party contained not among them a more zealous adherent; but in Parliament, the intolerable length, when increased by the dulness of his speeches, rendered him an absolute nuisance, even to his own friends. His rising always operated like a dinner-bell. One evening that he had thus wearied out the patience of his audience, having nearly cleared a very full House, which was reduced from three hundred to about eighty persons, half asleep; just at a time when he was expected to close, he unexpectedly moved that the Riot Act should be read as a document necessary to elucidate some of his foregoing assertions. Burke, who sat close by him, and who, wishing to speak to the question under discussion, which was a part of the Budget, had been bursting with impatience for more than an hour and a half, finding himself so cruelly disappointed, bounced up, exclaiming, while he laid hold of Hartley by the coat, "The Riot Act! my dear friend! the Riot Act! to what purpose? Don't you see that the mob is already completely dispersed? You have not twenty hearers." The sar-

"In the year 1783 the Duke of Portland came in, and almost immediately proposed to make D. Hartley one of the Lords of the Treasury. This place was accordingly allotted for him; but before a final settlement could occur, the old Duke of Norfolk earnestly desired that Lord Surrey might be one of the Lords of the Treasury. There being at that time only one vacancy, the Duke of Portland felt himself embarrassed, and communicated his dilemma to Hartley, who immediately replied, 'Then send me plenipotentiary to the United States; I shall be of more use in that situation.'"—*Warner's Literary Recollections*, 1830, vol. ii. p. 223. He died in 1813.—ED.

castic wit of this remark in the state of the House, which presented to the view only empty benches, when increased by the manner and the tone of despair in which Burke uttered it, convulsed every person present except Hartley, who never changed countenance, and insisted on the Riot Act being read by one of the clerks. Lord North himself recounted this story to Sir John Macpherson, from whom I received it.

I have heard the first Earl of Liverpool, then Mr. Jenkinson, say that Hartley having risen to speak about five o'clock during the session of the year 1779, in the month of June or of July, and it being generally understood that he would undoubtedly continue a long time on his legs, as he was to conclude with a motion, Jenkinson profited by the occasion to breathe some country air. He walked therefore from the House to his residence in Parliament Street, from whence, mounting his horse, he rode out to a place that he rented some miles from town. There he dined, strolled about, and in the evening returned slowly to London. As it was then near nine o'clock before he went down a second time to the House of Commons, he dispatched a servant to Mrs. Bennet, the housekeeper, requesting to be informed of the names of the principal persons who had spoken in the course of the debate, and likewise to know about what hour a division might probably be expected to take place. The footman brought back for answer that Mr. Hartley continued still speaking, but was expected to close soon, and that no other person had yet risen except himself. In fact, when Jenkinson entered the House soon afterwards, Hartley remained exactly in the same place and attitude as he was near five hours before, regardless of the general impatience or of the profound repose into

which the majority of his hearers were sunk.<sup>1</sup> However incredible this anecdote appears, I have related it without exaggeration.

[*October 1783.*] Autumn produced universal tranquillity, a peace with Holland following the treaties made with France, Spain, and America. In India hostilities had been long terminated with the Mah-rattas; and the death of Hyder Ally, the most formidable enemy with whom we had to contend in the East, which took place in December 1782, enabled us to continue the contest with France in that quarter of the world till the arrival at Madras of the intelligence of a general pacification in Europe. I availed myself of a fortunate circumstance to convey the first information of this event to India, and thereby stopped the further effusion of blood. My friend Lord Walsingham having in his possession two "extraordinary gazettes," issued on the 23d of January 1783, gave me one of them, which gazette I forwarded on the 25th of that month by the common post overland through Vienna, Constantinople, Aleppo, and Bussora to a friend at Madras. It contained the preliminaries of peace just signed at Paris between Great Britain, France, and Spain. The King's Ministers, as well as the East India Company, were equally bound by every principle of humanity and policy to have anticipated that gazette; but Lord Sydney, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, having delayed (on account of the unsettled nature of the Administration, which continued during many weeks in a species of suspension after Lord Shelburne's resignation) to dispatch the "Crocodile" frigate with the intelligence, and the Court of Directors remaining from the same cause equally negligent or torpid,

<sup>1</sup> Impatience precludes all repose. But the story is a good one, and this is not the first time of my hearing it.—P.



my letter reached Madras about the middle of the following month of June. Full six weeks elapsed subsequent to that time before any official information, either from the Court of Versailles, from the British Government, or from the East India House, arrived on the Coast of Coromandel. Our position at the moment when my account was received in that quarter of the globe might be esteemed most critical. We had formed the siege of Cuddalore, and were under hourly apprehension of a sally being made on the part of the enemy, whose force within the walls far exceeded the number of our own troops stationed in the trenches before the place. Under these circumstances, Lord Macartney, then Governor of Madras, having dispatched his secretary, Sir George Staunton, to Cuddalore with the identical gazette which my friend had laid before him; Bussy, who commanded the French forces, recognised its authenticity, and consented to publish an immediate cessation of arms.<sup>1</sup> Information of so extraordinary a fact was received in London from Madras early in 1784, accompanied by the recognition of its beneficial results to the East India Company. A member of the Court of Directors, Richard Atkinson, who then enjoyed great consideration in Leadenhall Street, impressed with a sense of the public benefits that had accrued from it, evinced a desire of procuring for me, as its author, some honorary mark of the Company's satisfaction or gratitude. But on his mentioning the subject to the chairman and deputy-chairman, they observed that to thank me for sending out intelligence of the conclusion of peace must seem to imply a tacit condemnation of

<sup>1</sup> A friendly annotator of this book on its first appearance made the following remark:—"After what we have witnessed of the various frauds of the Stock Exchange, forged Gazettes, Moniteurs, &c., I think an officer would hardly be now justified for such implicit confidence."  
—ED.

their own delay in so long withholding, or rather in neglecting to forward, the intelligence. The business remained therefore unnoticed, but I do not the less reflect upon it as one of the most gratifying acts of my whole life.

Hyder Ally, who had raised himself, like Buonaparte, from the rank of a military officer in the service of his native prince, the Rajah or sovereign of Mysore, to the possession of supreme power, was, beyond all competition, the greatest man whom India had beheld since the entry of Nadir Shah into Delhi, or perhaps since the death of Aurungzebe. It was twice the lot of Hyder to overrun the Carnatic, and to penetrate to the gates of Madras. His first irruption, which took place in 1769, may even be said to have dictated the treaty of peace concluded under the very walls of the city.<sup>1</sup> Governor Du Pré, who then presided over the East India Company's affairs on the Coast of Coromandel, held more than one interview with Hyder, while the negotiations were still pending, in order to adjust or to accelerate the conditions. Insensibly, during these personal conferences, as their mutual distrust and distance wore off, the Nabob put many questions to Du Pré, indicating equally the enlargement of his mind and displaying the easy familiarity of his manners. One of the circumstances which most excited the English Governor's astonishment was to see that Hyder had no eyebrows, nor, indeed, a single hair left on any part of his face. A man constantly attended near him, whose sole function and employment consisted in pulling out, with a pair of nippers, the first hair that made its appearance on the Sultan's countenance. Hyder perceiving the surprise which this fact occasioned in Du Pré, said

<sup>1</sup> Burke's magnificent description of the irruption of Hyder Ali into the Carnatic will ever keep this in remembrance.—ED.

to him, "I observe that you wonder at my having no eyebrows, as well as at my attention in causing every hair that appears on my face to be immediately eradicated. The reason I will explain to you. I am the Nabob of Mysore, and it forms an object of policy with me that my subjects should see no face in my dominions resembling the countenance of their sovereign." Du Pré assured Sir John Macpherson, to whom he related this anecdote, that he believed Hyder's practice proved him to possess a consummate knowledge of human nature, especially of his own subjects. "For," added he, "the impression which the Nabob's physiognomy made upon myself was not a little increased by its singularity." From the universal testimony of all those Europeans who had opportunities of knowing this extraordinary prince, it is unquestionable that his manners, voice, and deportment were most soft and ingratiating whenever he wished to please or affected to be gracious and benign; but he was terrible, and often ferocious in his anger, like the Caliph Haroun Alraschid, or like Peter I. of Russia. He died of abscesses or cancers in his loins, probably the consequences of debauchery, which carried him off before he attained to old age. After a war which, from its commencement at Lexington in 1775, had lasted near eight years, the world began to enjoy repose; but the efforts made by the Coalition to consolidate their political power soon produced at home the most violent convulsions, which terminated in their total downfall.

Two great legal characters finished their course nearly together in the autumn of 1783—Dunning in August, and Wallace in November. Both were eminent in their profession, but the intellectual superiority lay on the side of the former. Yet fortune had a greater share than merit or talents in elevating the

one to the peerage, while the other failed of attaining to that eminence. If Lord North's Administration had continued two or three years longer, and consequently if Lord Shelburne had been excluded from office, their destiny might probably have been reversed. I have been assured that a short time before Lord Ashburton's decease, these two distinguished lawyers, finding themselves by accident in the same inn at Bagshot—Dunning on his way down into Devonshire, and the other returning from thence to London—both of them conscious that their recovery from the disorders under which they laboured was desperate, expressed a strong mutual wish to enjoy a last interview with each other. For that purpose they were carried into the same apartment, laid down on two sofas nearly opposite, and remained together for a long time in conversation. They then parted, as men who could not hope to meet again in this state of existence. By Wallace's decease Lee became Attorney-General, and Mansfield was replaced in his former situation of Solicitor-General, which he had filled under Lord North's Administration.

I passed a considerable part of the autumn with Lord Sackville at Drayton in Northamptonshire. Though in his sixty-eighth year, he possessed great activity of body, cheerfulness of temper, and the perfect possession of all his faculties. Drayton had formerly belonged to the Mordaunts, Earls of Peterborough, from whom it passed into the possession of Henry, Duke of Norfolk, by his marriage with Lady Mary Mordaunt under the reign of William III. He did not, however, long retain it, having obtained a divorce from the Duchess on account of a criminal connection which she carried on with Sir John Germain; and as the Duke had no issue by her, Drayton reverted to the Lady. Lord Sackville hav-

ing assumed the name of Germain, and having inherited the estate of Drayton, it was natural that I should inquire how he came to be called to that succession. He has frequently related to me the particulars, which I shall recount in his own words.

“Sir John Germain’s extraction,” said he, “which was uncertain and variously reported, has given rise to much discussion. His reputed father bore arms as a private soldier in the Life Guards of William II., Prince of Orange; but his mother, who possessed great personal charms, fame asserted to have been that prince’s mistress, and her son was believed to stand in a very close degree of consanguinity to King William III. Other circumstances tend to confirm this opinion. Sir John Germain inherited no paternal coat of arms, but he assumed, or rather used as his seal and armorial bearing, a red cross; meaning thereby probably to imply that his pretensions ascended higher than his ostensible birth. Even when, by the provisions of his widow, Lady Betty Germain’s will, I inherited Drayton, on the condition of assuming the name of Germain, no mention was made of the arms, as is customary in almost all similar cases. King William, with whom Sir John came over here from Holland in 1688, unquestionably regarded him with distinguishing affection, and advanced him in life. He became a member of Parliament, received the honour of knighthood, and various pecuniary grants or donations to a considerable amount were conferred on him by that prince.

“Sir John Germain, whose person was very distinguished, was always a favourite of the other sex. His connection with the Duchess of Norfolk finally procured him this place and estate, as she married him after her divorce from the Duke. They lived together several years; but no children being left

alive, and the title of Earl of Peterborough having reverted to a collateral branch of the Mordaunt family, she bequeathed to him by her will, in the year 1705, the house and property of Drayton, which lay entirely in her own disposal. Sir John, who, though he was naturalised, and become by long residence in this country in a great degree an Englishman, retained nevertheless many of the habits of a native of Holland, attached himself much to my mother. She being the daughter of Marshal Colyear, brother to the first Earl of Portmore, who had entered early into the Dutch service, and who was an old friend of Sir John Germain, he always called her his countrywoman, visited frequently at my father's house, and was kindly received by the Duke and Duchess of Dorset. Finding himself in possession of a considerable landed property after the death of his wife, and desirous of transmitting it to his own descendants, but being destitute of any natural connections, he meditated to engraft himself on some distinguished family of this kingdom. For the express purpose, while resident at Bristol Wells on account of his health, he cast his eyes upon Lady Betty Berkeley, a daughter of the Earl of Berkeley, whose birth, character, and accomplishments rendered her every way worthy of his choice. The marriage took place. She was indeed many years younger than Sir John, but as she possessed a superior understanding, added to the most correct deportment, she acquired great influence over him. Having been herself previously intimate with the Duchess of Dorset, the friendship between the two families became cemented by the alliance. Sir John Germain had several children by her, who all died young, and in the evening of his life becoming a martyr to the gout as well as to other diseases, Lady Betty assiduously performed every duty of an

affectionate wife, and of a careful nurse about his person.

“A short time before his decease, which happened in the year 1718, having called her to his bedside, ‘Lady Betty,’ said he, ‘I have made you a very indifferent husband, and particularly of late years, when infirmities have rendered me a burden to myself; but I shall not be much longer troublesome to you. I advise you never again to marry an old man, but I strenuously exhort you to marry when I am gone, and I will endeavour to put it in your power. You have fulfilled every obligation towards me in an exemplary manner, and I wish to demonstrate my sense of your merits. I have, therefore, by my will, bequeathed you this estate, which I received from my first wife, and which as she gave to me, so I leave to you. I hope you will marry and have children to inherit it. But if events should determine otherwise, or if you should not have issue that survive you, it would give me pleasure to think that Drayton descended after your decease to a younger son of my friend the Duchess of Dorset.’ In consequence of this wish expressed by Sir John Germain on his death-bed, I now enjoy the estate. Lady Betty, though young, when left a widow, and though she survived him above fifty years, never married a second time. Her friendship for my mother always continued without diminution, and her respect for the desire manifested by her husband induced her to fulfil his wishes, to the exclusion of any of her own relations.”

While writing on this subject, I shall endeavour to throw into one point some of the numerous particulars relative to his own family which in the course of conversation I heard from Lord Sackville. They are all connected more or less with English history. In order to give them more verity and

accuracy, I shall, as nearly as I am able, present them in his own words.

"The Sackvilles," said he, "who came into England with the Conqueror, and who derived their name from a small village of Low Normandy, have never branched in the lapse of more than seven hundred years. During the last two centuries the family has produced three distinguished men, of whom the first was the Lord Treasurer Buckhurst, whom our great Elizabeth thought worthy to succeed Lord Burleigh in that high office, and whom James I. created Earl of Dorset. It would have been fortunate for the Scottish King if he had presided longer in the councils of the crown, but he soon followed his royal mistress, and made way, after a short interval, for those favourites, Carr and Villiers, who covered James with disgrace. His grandson, Edward, Earl of Dorset,<sup>1</sup> the friend and contemporary of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, but better known by his duel with Lord Bruce, performed an eminent part under Charles I. He accompanied that prince during the civil wars, and fought in most of the actions, from Edgehill down to Naseby. But, like the virtuous Lord Falkland, he regretted and lamented the very advantages to which he contributed by his sword. Many of his letters written between 1643 and 1646, which are preserved among the Dorset papers, descriptive of the scenes of havoc then acting in every part of the kingdom, convey a high idea of his principles. His days were embittered and abbreviated by his royal

<sup>1</sup> The Earl of Dorset, then Sir Edward Sackville, who was born in 1590 and died in 1652. Edward Lord Bruce challenged him in August 1613, and the duel was fought in Holland, when Bruce was killed. Letters between Edward Bruce (Baron of Kinloss) and Sir Edward Sackville were printed in the *Guardian*, No. 129. Sir Edward Sackville's account of the fight, dated Louvain, 8th September 1613, was printed in the 133d number of the same.—ED.



master's tragical end, which he only survived about three years.

"My grandfather, Charles, commonly called the witty Earl of Dorset, died about ten years before I was born, after having survived in a great degree his faculties. He was during his whole life the patron of men of genius and the dupe of women. Bountiful beyond measure to both, though he inherited not only the paternal estate of the Sackvilles, but likewise that of the Cranfields, Earls of Middlesex, in right of his mother, yet at his decease, my father, then eighteen years of age, possessed so slender a fortune, that his guardians, when they sent him to travel on the Continent, allowed him only eight hundred pounds a year for his provision.<sup>1</sup> Charles, Earl of Dorset, married three times, but only one of these marriages contributed either to his honour or to his felicity. His first wife was the celebrated Countess of Falmouth, well known by her gallantries; the Miss Bagot of 'Grammont's Memoirs,'<sup>2</sup> whom Dryden has designated as—

'A teeming widow, but a barren wife.'

Happily she left him no issue; and in his second matrimonial connection he consulted not only his inclination but his judgment when he gave his hand to a daughter of the Earl of Northampton. He had then nearly attained his fiftieth year; and as he was only twenty-three at the time of Charles II.'s restoration, the excesses of that dissolute reign, in which Lord Dorset led the way, had already enfeebled his constitution.<sup>3</sup> Strongly attached to the principles of

<sup>1</sup> At that time, however, this was considered a large income on the Continent.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth, daughter of Hervey Bagot. In "Grammont's Memoirs" she is described as "the only one who was possessed of virtue and beauty among the maids of honour."—ED.

<sup>3</sup> "His old sneaking way,  
Drinking all night and dosing all the day."  
—Dryden and Mulgrave's "*Essay on Satire*."—ED.

civil liberty, he quitted James II. when that infatuated prince attempted to introduce Popery, and conducted the Princess Anne of Denmark from her father's palace at Whitehall to the coach which waited for her in St. James's Park to convey her to Nottingham. While crossing over from the palace to the Park by night and in winter, one of her Royal Highness's shoes sticking fast in the mud, the accident threatened to impede her escape; but Lord Dorset immediately drawing off his white glove, put it on the Princess's foot, and placed her safely in the carriage. To King William my grandfather rendered himself not less acceptable than he had been to Charles II., and I have always been assured that it only depended on himself to have been raised to a dukedom under William's reign; but his wife's relations, the Comptons, treating the matter when he mentioned it to them with great indifference, he said, 'the Earldom of Dorset was quite good enough for him.' In fact, my father only attained to that dignity near thirty years afterwards under George I.

"Extenuated by pleasures and indulgences, the Earl of Dorset sunk under a premature old age, though not as early as Rochester, Buckingham, and so many others of his contemporaries had done, including Charles II. himself, all of whom fell victims to their immoderate pursuit of enjoyments. A few years before he died he married a woman named Roche, of very obscure connections, who held him in a sort of captivity at Bath, where he expired at about sixty-nine.<sup>1</sup> She suffered few persons to approach him during his last illness, or rather decay, and was supposed to have converted his weakness

<sup>1</sup> Charles, sixth Earl of Dorset, born January 24, 1637. Until 1675 he was known as Lord Buckhurst, but in that year he was created Earl of Middlesex and Baron of Cranfield. In 1677 he succeeded his father as Earl of Dorset. The woman Roche is not mentioned in the Peerages. He died January 29, 1705-6.—ED.

of mind to her own objects of personal acquisition. He was indeed considered to be fallen into a state of such imbecility as would render it necessary to appoint guardians with a view to prevent his injuring the family estate ; but the intention was nevertheless abandoned. You have no doubt heard, and it is a fact, that with a view of ascertaining whether Lord Dorset continued to be of a sane mind, Prior, whom he had patronised and always regarded with predilection, was sent down to Bath by the family. Having obtained access to the Earl and conversed with him, Prior made his report in these words : ‘ Lord Dorset is certainly greatly declined in his understanding, but he drivels so much better sense even now than any other man can talk, that you must not call me into court as a witness to prove him an idiot.’

“ My father, while in early youth having lost his own mother, was brought up chiefly by the Dowager Countess of Northampton, his grandmother. She being particularly acceptable to Queen Mary, that princess commanded her always to bring her little grandson, Lord Buckhurst, to Kensington Palace, though at that time hardly four years of age, and he was allowed to amuse himself with a child’s cart in the gallery. King William, like almost all Dutchmen, never failed to attend the tea-table every evening. It happened that her Majesty having one afternoon, by his desire, made tea, and waiting for the King’s arrival, who was engaged on business in his cabinet at the other extremity of the gallery, the boy, hearing the Queen express her impatience at the delay, ran away to the closet, dragging after him the cart. When he arrived at the door, he knocked ; and the King asking, ‘ Who is there ? ’ ‘ Lord Buck,’ answered he. ‘ And what does Lord Buck want with me ? ’ replied his Majesty. ‘ You must come

to tea directly,' said he; 'the Queen is waiting for you.' King William immediately laid down his pen and opened the door. Then taking the child in his arms, he placed Lord Buckhurst in the cart, and seizing the pole, drew them both along the gallery to the room in which were seated the Queen, Lady Northampton, and the company. But no sooner had he entered the apartment than, exhausted with the effort, which had forced the blood upon his lungs, and being constitutionally asthmatic, he threw himself into a chair, and for some minutes was incapable of uttering a word, breathing with the utmost difficulty. The Countess of Northampton, shocked at the consequences of her grandson's indiscretion, which threw the whole circle into great consternation, would have punished him, but the King interposed in his behalf; and the story is chiefly interesting because, as serving to show how kindly he could behave towards a troublesome child, it places that prince in a more amiable point of view than he is commonly represented in history. Henry IV. of France, when playing on the floor with his own children, as he was found by the Spanish ambassador, could not have manifested more amenity or good-humour. The Queen being accustomed to take Lord Buckhurst in her arms and to caress him whenever he was brought to Kensington, his nurse, aware of the circumstance, gave him secretly a written paper, which she charged him to deliver privately to her Majesty. He did so, without acquainting Lady Northampton, who, being present, interposed to prevent him; but the Queen insisted on perusing its contents. It contained a petition drawn up by the woman in favour of her brother, then condemned to death for a capital crime. Queen Mary, touched with the incident, laid it before the King, who caused inquiry to be made into the cir-

cumstances of the case, with a view, if possible, of extending mercy to the culprit. On examination, the crime being of a nature not to admit of pardon, the Queen, as the only alleviation left in her power to bestow, gave Lord Buckhurst a purse, containing ten Jacobuses, enjoining him to present it to his nurse from herself, with the assurances of her concern at the impossibility that existed of saving her brother's life."

"I was born," continued Lord Sackville, "in the year 1716, in the Haymarket, where my father then resided, and received my name from George I., who was my godfather, having honoured the ceremony of my baptism by his personal presence. One of the earliest circumstances which made an impression on my mind was that of being carried, at five years of age, by the servants to the gate of St. James's Palace, in order to see the great Duke of Marlborough as he came out of court. He was then in a state of caducity, but still retained the vestiges of a most graceful figure, though he was obliged to be supported by a servant on each side, while the tears ran down his cheeks, just as he is drawn by Johnson, who says—

'From Marlborough's eyes the tears of dotage flow.'

The populace cheered him while passing through the crowd to enter his carriage. I have, however, heard my father assert that the Duke of Marlborough by no means fell into irrecoverable or settled dotage, as we commonly suppose. On the contrary, he manifested at times a sound understanding till within a very short period of his decease, occasionally attending the Privy Council and sometimes speaking in his official capacity, on points of public business with his former ability.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Marlborough lived eight years after his return, happy in the enjoyment of that leisure and tranquillity which he had always de-

"No man displayed greater zeal than my father for the succession in the House of Brunswick. After Queen Anne's death in 1714, he was sent to Hanover, returned with the new King from Herrenhausen to England in September of the same year, and had the honour to accompany George I. in the coach which conveyed him on his landing from Greenwich to London. Thirty-three years earlier he had been a suitor for the hand of the Queen whom he then succeeded, having come over with that view from Germany to this country in 1681, by permission of his father, Ernest Augustus; but the proposition failed of success. On his return, riding a common post-horse from London to Gravesend, where he took shipping for Holland, the horse and the road being equally bad, he got a severe fall, and arrived at Gravesend covered with mud. The King, who related this circumstance to Lord Dorset as they came up together in the coach, recognised and pointed out the spot where the misadventure befell him.

"When the intelligence of his decease, which took place near Osnaburgh in the end of June 1727, reached London, the Cabinet having immediately met, thought proper to dispatch the Duke of Dorset with the information to the Prince of Wales. He then resided at Kew, in a state of great aliena-

sired. It is not true, as Johnson has taught us to believe, that the tears of dotage flowed from his eyes. In the year 1716 he had two paralytic strokes, but recovered both his strength and faculties, except that there were a few words which he could not distinctly articulate. In other respects, however, he was so little impaired that he continued to attend Parliament and to perform the business of his office as Captain-General and Master of the Ordnance till within six months of his death. He wished to resign those offices, but was induced by Sunderland's entreaties and the King's particular desire to retain them. At length a return of the disorder proved fatal; he lay for some days aware of approaching dissolution, and in full possession of his senses he quietly expired, on the 16th of June 1722, in the seventy-second year of his age."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xxiii. p. 69.—ED.

tion from the King, the two courts maintaining no communication. Some little time being indispensable before my father could appear in a suitable manner before the new monarch, he sent forward the Duchess, his wife, in order to announce the event. She arrived at Kew just as the Prince, according to his invariable custom, having undressed himself after dinner, had lain down in bed. The Duchess demanding permission to see him immediately on matters of the greatest importance, the servants acquainted the Princess of Wales with her arrival; and the Duchess without a moment's hesitation informed her Royal Highness, that George I. lay dead at Osnaburgh; that the Cabinet had ordered her husband to be the bearer of the intelligence to his successor, and that the Duke would follow her in a very short time. She added that not a moment should be lost in communicating so great an event to the Prince, as the Ministers wished him to come up to London that same evening, in order to summon a Privy Council to issue a proclamation, and take other requisite measures at the commencement of a new reign.

"To the propriety of all these steps the Princess assented, but at the same time informed the Duchess that she could not venture to enter her husband's room, as he had only just taken off his clothes and composed himself to sleep. 'Besides,' added she, 'the Prince will not give credit to the intelligence; but will exclaim that it is a fabrication designed for the purpose of exposing him.' The Duchess continuing nevertheless to remonstrate with her Royal Highness on the injurious consequences of losing time, and adding that the Duke of Dorset would expect to find the Prince not only apprised of it, but ready to accompany him to London; the Princess of Wales took off her shoes, opened the cham-

ber door softly and advanced up to the bedside, while my mother remained at the threshold till she should be allowed to enter the apartment. As soon as the Princess came near the bed, a voice from under the clothes cried out in German, 'Was ist das?' 'I am come, sir,' answered she, 'to announce to you the death of the King, which has taken place in Germany.' 'That is one dammed trick,' returned the Prince; 'I do not believe one word of it.' 'Sir,' said the Princess, 'it is most certain. The Duchess of Dorset has just brought the intelligence, and the Duke will be here immediately. The Ministers hope that you will repair to town this very evening, as your presence there is indispensable.' Her Royal Highness then threw herself on her knees to kiss the new King's hand, and beckoning to the Duchess of Dorset to advance, she came in likewise, knelt down, and assured him of the indisputable truth of his father's decease. Convinced at length of the fact, he consented to get up and dress himself. The Duke of Dorset arriving in his coach-and-six almost immediately afterwards, George II. quitted Kew the same evening for London." I return to the progress of public affairs.

[*November 1783.*] When we reflect on the manner in which Fox had attained to power, as well as on the long though ineffectual resistance made by the King, followed by his sullen resignation under a yoke which he found it impossible to elude or throw off; when we consider these facts, it cannot excite surprise that Fox should meditate the means of confirming and perpetuating his precarious tenure of office. He felt himself perfectly odious to the sovereign, whom he had too deeply offended easily to obtain forgiveness. From that quarter, therefore, he well knew that he might be undermined or subverted, but he could not hope to receive a cordial



support. Unfortunately he had likewise recently lost in a very considerable degree the confidence and attachment of the people. So long as the American war lasted, he retained, in defiance of his private irregularities, their ardent affection. Of this sentiment they gave him many proofs, particularly after his duel with Adam,<sup>1</sup> when the wound which he received, exciting apprehensions for his life, the populace surrounded his lodgings, with testimonies of clamorous anxiety, as well as of corresponding resentment against his Ministerial and personal opponents.

Since that time, the inhabitants of Westminster, manifesting the same partiality, had elected him one of their representatives in Parliament, a situation which enabled him not only to defend their liberties in the House of Commons, but conferred likewise the means of convoking, haranguing, and propelling them in tumultuary assemblies, convened for the express purpose in Westminster Hall. To a man of Fox's energy and talents, this additional facility of thus presiding in a species of mob, at the very door of the two Houses of Parliament, as well as at a very inconsiderable distance from the royal residence, doubled his consequence, and might be said to render him a tribune of the people in the most literal sense of the word, nearly as that office was exercised in ancient Rome previous to the subversion of the Commonwealth. Nor had his popularity suffered at all in the general estimation by his acceptance of office under Lord Rockingham, though the fallacy

<sup>1</sup> William Adam, born at Leith in 1746, fought a duel with Fox in 1779, and afterwards became his friend. In 1815 he was appointed Lord Chief Commissioner of the Scotch jury court, and he had previously been engaged in almost all election cases of importance. At one time his fortune was lessened by the unusual circumstance of a river changing its course (in consequence of a storm), in which he possessed a salmon-fishery. He acquired the name of "Atticus" from his always standing well with all parties.—ED.

and delusion of many of his promises or assertions had become sufficiently manifest even during his short stay in the Cabinet under that Administration. On the motives and on the propriety or necessity of his resignation after Lord Shelburne's elevation to the head of the Treasury, mankind seemed indeed divided, some applauding it as an act of magnanimous public virtue, renunciation, and self-devotion, while others beheld in it only personal rivalry, enmity, and resentment.

But relative to his junction with his present colleague, Lord North, the suffrages of the world, from the highest down to the lowest classes, united to reprobate it in a greater or less degree. And I have always thought that Fox himself, in his impatience to regain office, miscalculated, or did not sufficiently appreciate, the operation on the public mind of his conduct in thus taking to his bosom in March 1783 the very Minister on whose head in March 1782 he had invoked the utmost vengeance of an offended and ruined nation. Some longer interval of time was required to reconcile men to such an apparent dereliction of principle and so total a sacrifice of decorum at the shrine of ambition. Here the transmutation had been so rapid as not only to shock the most ordinary understanding; it even impressed with secret concern or disgust many of those who nevertheless, from a variety of motives, affected to justify and to support the measure. Pope says—

“Lust, through some certain strainers well refined,  
Is gentle love, and charms all female kind.”

But it must pass through those refiners and leave its dross behind or conceal it before love can charm or challenge respect. I have heard Colonel Macalister, late Governor of the Island of Penang in

the East Indies, frequently assert that there existed in the town of that settlement a receptacle or space of ground surrounded by walls into which was commonly thrown every species of corrupted and putrified substance. In a hot climate the process from dissolution to revivification we know is very rapid. Maggots in immense numbers of a prodigious size were speedily generated or produced from this filth, which the Chinese inhabitants of the settlement, who possessed no means of regular subsistence, and who therefore were not fastidious about their diet, used to collect with rakes from off the heaps of carcases, and to devour immediately after frying them in *ghce* or melted butter. Colonel Macalister indeed added, that the Chinese who fed on such aliments became subject to cutaneous and leprous diseases of the most inveterate kind. We perceive, however, that all animal and vegetable substances perpetually change their forms; and, disgusting as this recital may be, that sentiment only arises from the rapidity of the metamorphosis. Precisely of the same kind, in a political sense, appeared the coalition between Lord North and Fox, a transformation which, being consummated in the space of a few hours, was then imposed upon the House of Commons and the nation. But the English people, indignant at such a compact, which revolted their moral feelings, rejected in general with abhorrence the dish served up to them, and dismissed the state cooks who had prepared it for the country.

Well aware as Fox was, therefore, that though he had a second time forced his way into high employment, yet he neither enjoyed the favour of the crown nor any longer possessed the affection of the people in general, it was natural he should look to some other quarter for permanent support. In the two Houses of Parliament, where he commanded

a decided majority, he beheld the foundation on which he might construct a citadel, unassailable, as he conceived, either by the sovereign or by the nation. India, which presented the materials for his edifice, seemed to invite his exertions to remodel that vast empire, convulsed and half-subverted by internal discord or corruption added to external hostilities. Burke, whose friend or relative of the same name, William Burke,<sup>1</sup> was already stationed in the East as agent with the Rajah of Tanjore, and who had himself taken a most active part in all the parliamentary discussions arising out of the reports of the secret and select committees during the two preceding sessions, aspired with equal ardour and impatience to second Fox in this great undertaking. It had even been announced from the throne, when the King terminated the sitting of Parliament in the preceding month of July, that India would form the first object of their deliberations on their again meeting for business.

During the course of the autumn, Fox and Burke, therefore, aided by the law-officers of the crown, drew up and prepared the memorable bill which it was intended to introduce as soon as the session should commence in November. They communicated all the heads and outlines of it to Lord North, with whom, indeed, as being in his department, the measure ought strictly to have originated, but who was induced in this instance, as in many other cases, to allow the energies of his colleague, added to the superior information possessed by Burke on the subject, to supplant, and in some measure to supersede, him in his official functions. The bill thus far organised, and having been generally approved in

<sup>1</sup> William Burke, a near kinsman of Edmund Burke, M.P. for Great Bedwin, Wilts, Under-Secretary of State, 1766-68. The letters of "Junius" have been attributed to him. He died in 1798.—ED.

the Cabinet, was then submitted to the King for his private perusal and sanction, accompanied with becoming expressions on their part of the wish and desire entertained by Ministers to accommodate it to his Majesty's ideas upon every point before it should be brought into Parliament. Unable of himself by the powers of his own mind, without some assistance, to form a competent judgment upon its complicated provisions, operation, and general results, it was understood that the King had early thought proper to lay it confidentially before Lord Thurlow, desiring at the same time to know his legal opinion respecting its nature. Common rumour added that the opinion delivered by Lord Thurlow represented it as calculated to render Ministers independent of the crown, and as containing many clauses injurious to, or nearly subversive of, the British constitution itself, but that his Majesty was advised to wait for its more complete development before he expressed any disapprobation or attempted any resistance. Such might be considered the general state and aspect of affairs in the first days of November, when a curious incident which unexpectedly took place at St. James's, and which excited no little speculation, seemed to show that the ground on which the Ministry stood was hollow and treacherous.

Sir Eyre Coote, who long commanded the armies of the East India Company on the Coast of Coromandel with distinguished reputation, and whose name is immortalised in the modern history of Asia, after repulsing Hyder Ally and rescuing the Carnatic, expired at Madras, worn out and extenuated by disease, on the 26th of April 1783, having survived his antagonist Hyder scarcely five months. The intelligence of his decease, which was transmitted overland, reached Leadenhall Street early in

November. No sooner had it been communicated to Fox, than he immediately destined the ribband of the Order of the Bath, which became vacant on Sir Eyre's death, for one of his intimate friends, Mr. Bielby Thompson. This gentleman, who possessed a very fine estate in Yorkshire at Wetherby Grange, near the town of that name, sat at that time in Parliament as member for Thirsk in the county of York. Fox, after conferring on the subject with the Duke of Portland and Lord North, whom he acquainted with his intentions, repaired to St. James's, where, having gone into the closet, he announced to the King the event that had taken place in India. He then mentioned Mr. Thompson as the person whom he wished, on the part of Ministers, to recommend for the vacant ribband; and his Majesty in answer seems to have expressed that species of acquiescence, more probably tacit than couched in precise words, which the Secretary at once interpreted, whether judiciously or not, to constitute full compliance. Without waiting, therefore, for any more explicit declaration from the King on the subject, as prudence seemed to dictate, Fox then informed Mr. Thompson of his having received the royal assent, and added that the investiture would take place at the next levée. Directions were accordingly issued to Norroy King-of-arms, and the proper officers belonging to the Herald's College, to attend at St. James's for the purpose. The circumstance being publicly known, Mr. Thompson was felicitated by anticipation on the honour destined for him; but the sequel proved that Fox had either miscalculated or misunderstood the whole transaction.

On the day fixed, his Majesty repaired to St. James's at the usual hour to prepare for the levée. After he had finished dressing, he sent out the

Groom of the Bedchamber in waiting, as was his frequent custom, to bring him information relative to the number of persons who were arrived. The gentleman returning, acquainted the King that besides a numerous assemblage come to attend the levée, the officers of the Bath stood likewise without ready for the investiture. With some surprise marked in his countenance the King asked what investiture he meant. To which question he replied, not without hesitation, that he understood it was intended to confer the Order of the Bath on Mr. Bielby Thompson, who was attending there in person for that express purpose. His Majesty made no answer, and immediately afterwards the Duke of Portland entering, went into the closet. In the course of his audience the King observed to him that no official account having been as yet received from India of Sir Eyre Coote's death, however authentic the information of that event transmitted from Madras might prove, and his ribband, together with the other insignia of the Order, not having been hitherto delivered back to himself, he apprehended it would be informal to fill up the vacancy till those points were previously ascertained and executed.<sup>1</sup> The Duke, taken by surprise, after attempting respectfully to bring his Majesty to another way of thinking, withdrew, and finding Mr. Fox in the next apartment, communicated to him this most unexpected and mortifying piece of information.

The Secretary, equally astonished as well as chagrined, instantly went in, when a long conversation took place between him and the sovereign. In its progress Fox stated that having some days preceding laid the business before his Majesty, and conceiving that he had obtained his royal approba-

<sup>1</sup> The King appears to have been in the right in this case as to the etiquette which had always been observed.—ED.

tion and consent to confer on Mr. Thompson the vacant red ribband, it had been so signified to that gentleman, who, together with the proper officers, were then waiting without in readiness for the ceremony. He added, that in point of fact no possible doubt could be entertained of Sir Eyre Coote's death, and that a disappointment, after the preparations and publicity of the affair, could not fail to be attended with very unpleasant consequences to Administration in the general opinion. To all these arguments and expostulations the King, after alleging his own reasons, remained inflexible. Fox therefore, quitting the closet, returned to his colleagues, various of whom assembled in the outer room were waiting under considerable anxiety, and imparted to them the unsuccessful result of his audience. No little confusion ensued among them. Mr. Thompson, apprised of the mortifying fact, returned home. The officers of the Bath, ordered to withdraw, were acquainted that the ceremony expected would not take place on that day. Every person present formed his own comments or conjectures respecting the scene which had just passed under his eyes, and the old courtiers did not fail to draw inferences from it highly adverse to the duration of Ministers. It was obvious that the King, who felt no disposition to oblige them, had got possession of the vantage-ground in the contest, whereas Fox had acted with some degree of indiscretion as well as precipitation in presuming upon an assent rather implied or assumed than unequivocally expressed. Many men considered the whole proceeding as a thing concerted, and the result of deeper causes than were apparent to common observers. By exposing the Administration to ridicule as well as to mortification, it unquestionably served to prepare the public mind for some approaching convulsion or alteration in the Government.



If the business of Sir Eyre Coote's ribband was attended with these unpleasant results to the Ministry, they received, on the other hand, just at this time a prodigious accession to strength and consideration from the avowed junction of the Prince of Wales, who having attained his twenty-first year in the preceding month of August, had recently established his court and residence at Carlton House.<sup>1</sup> Nature had bestowed uncommon graces on his figure and person, nor were his manners less highly distinguished than his birth. Probably James, Duke of Monmouth, son of Charles II., did not excel him in all these bodily accomplishments. Like the princes of the House of Brunswick, he manifested an early tendency to become corpulent; nor did he, like George III., repress that disposition by abstinence or renunciation. Convivial as well as social in his temper, destitute of all reserve, and affable even to familiarity in his reception of every person who had the honour to approach him, he presented in these respects a contrast to the shy, correct, and distant manners of the King his father. Endowed with all the aptitudes to profit by instruction, his mind had been cultivated with great care, and he was probably the only prince in Europe, heir to a powerful monarchy, competent to peruse the Greek as well as the Roman poets and historians in their own language. Capable of warm and steady friendship, he possessed a heart not less susceptible of love and alive to the impressions as well as to the seduction of female charms. Humane and compassionate, his purse was open to every application of distress, nor was it ever shut against genius or merit. Even if these virtues were mingled with considerable alloy, yet his facility, his ardent pursuit of pleasure, and

<sup>1</sup> It was about this time that the Prince said, if his father disliked the Coalition he should be made to like it, by G—d !—D.

his inattention to economy, all might derive some apology from his youth and the elevation on which he stood, circumstances that necessarily exposed him to great as well as corresponding temptations of every kind.

Nor ought we, if we candidly examine the subject, to feel either surprise or any degree of moral disapprobation at the predilection and preference which he had imbibed, and which he openly manifested, for an Administration odious to his father. When he looked back on the twenty-three years of George III.'s reign, he beheld little matter for admiration, though ample reason for regret. At the peace of 1763, Lord Bute had sacrificed or restored to France and Spain almost all the acquisitions of Pitt. Wilkes and "Junius," aided by Churchill, had covered with opprobrium or overwhelmed with ridicule almost all the Ministers employed between the Treaty of Fontainebleau and the commencement of the American war; nor had the sovereign himself escaped their severe animadversions on his personal conduct and government. In the gulf of the American contest the treasures of England had been expended, her navy disgraced, her commerce nearly destroyed, her public burthens accumulated, her national debt immensely augmented, her armies defeated or made prisoners, and we had finally lost a vast empire beyond the Atlantic. Precisely as this calamitous consummation took place, the Prince of Wales, emerging from the restraint under which he had been hitherto held, made his appearance on the theatre of public life, and emancipated himself from parental superintendence or control. It was not merely natural, but almost unavoidable, that he should view those events through the optics and representations of Fox and Burke rather than through any other medium. Neither George II.

nor Frederick his son could plead the same apology, or exhibit such valid causes to justify enlisting, as they respectively did, under the party adverse to the measures of the crown. Fox and his friends, who well knew how to improve these favourable circumstances, contrived to effect a deep as well as a permanent impression on the affections no less than on the understanding of the heir-apparent.

[11th November 1783.] The session now commenced—a session rendered conspicuous beyond any other of the long reign of George III. by the magnitude, singularity, and importance of its events, unless we should except from this remark the Parliament that met in November 1788, on the King's memorable malady. A species of ostensible unanimity, like the calm that sometimes precedes the storm, characterised its opening; Pitt concurring warmly in the address to the throne, moved by Administration, for approving the definitive treaties signed with France, Spain, and America. He did not, however, fail to remark with indignant asperity on the inconsistency of thanking the crown for merely consummating the very work of which he and his colleagues had laid all the foundations, in consequence of conferring which national benefit they had been driven from office. "Yet," concluded he, "if the measures which Ministers mean to propose should meet my ideas, and appear to me salutary in their nature, I will not endeavour to defeat them by an ignoble opposition; but I will, on the contrary, give them my best support." Fox with much ingenuity endeavoured to demonstrate to the House that the definitive treaties, far from being servile transcripts of the preliminaries, were, on the contrary, materially altered in favour of this country. And with a view to prove his assertion, he particularised three articles, on each of which, as he asserted,

important ameliorations had taken place. These were, first, relative to the condition of the British inhabitants of the island of Tobago ; secondly, an accurate definition of the geographical limits within which the gum trade on the coast of Africa might in future be carried on ; and, lastly, the precise boundaries affixed to the territorial possessions of our allies in the East Indies. I own, however, that the aggregate merit of these concessions, or rather alterations, did not appear to me entitled to much encomium. They seemed to be rather inaccuracies or inadvertencies than defects, and were such blemishes as every Administration must equally have perceived and remedied after the lapse of a few months.

Pitt made little answer to the Secretary of State's speech, in the progress of which he had announced his intention of bringing forward almost immediately his plan for the new government of India. But Governor Johnstone with some warmth, not to say violence, which characterised every sentiment which usually fell from his lips, claimed for Mr. Hastings all the merit of expelling Tippoo Sultan from the Carnatic, as well as of effecting a peace with the Mahratta empire—services which, if they were justly due to the ability or wisdom of the Governor-General, as Johnstone asserted, might have challenged higher testimonies of national or parliamentary approbation than Fox's boasted improvements contained in the definitive treaty made with France. Johnstone concluded by warning Ministers not to enforce any plans for the administration of India without previously consulting the persons who, from local knowledge and experience, knew the remedies most applicable to the disorders of those remote and valuable possessions. The Treasury bench observed a profound silence, and the House soon afterwards broke up, all men looking forward with anxiety to the great

measure now announced upon Ministerial authority, and of which the leading features were already known by common report to be of the most vigorous as well as comprehensive nature. The celebrated "East India Bill" followed after the interval of a few days. It was natural to suppose that Lord North, within whose department lay all regulation of our concerns in that quarter of the globe, would of course open the measure officially in the House; but instead of so doing, he absented himself on account of indisposition, leaving Fox to perform the task—a line of conduct which, whether it arose from real necessity or whether it was preconcerted, operated very disadvantageously on the minds of many individuals attached to Lord North who had hitherto supported the Coalition. They beheld themselves, in fact, completely abandoned by their ancient leader, who seemed to have delivered up himself, his followers, his sovereign, and his political principles to the uncontrolled dominion of his new associates, Fox and Burke.

[18th November 1783.] I scarcely ever remember during the time that I sat in Parliament a day on which public expectation was wound up to a higher pitch than when Fox opened his bill. He did it in the most able and masterly manner, detailing with perspicuity, in language equally lucid and persuasive, the accumulated embarrassments, abuses, and maladministration which had necessitated the adoption of a measure of vigour for the extrication of the East India Company. Having stated the grievances, among which he did not omit Hastings' ambitious, profuse, and oppressive policy as the leading source of the calamities under which India laboured, and having declared that nothing except a total change in the ancient system could effect any real benefit, he proceeded to unfold his gigantic plan. "My

intention is," said he, "to propose the formation of a Board, consisting of seven individuals, invested with power to appoint as well as to displace all officers throughout Hindostan, and under whose authority the whole government or administration of our extensive possessions in the East shall be placed. My next proposition will be for the establishment of an assistant or subordinate Board, to be composed of eight persons, to whose superintendence shall be submitted all the commercial concerns of the East India Company. But the latter Board is designed to be subject to the absolute control of the seven first-named Commissioners, who, as well as the others, are to hold their sittings here in England."—"I mean that Parliament shall in the present instance name all the Commissioners; and I intend their duration to be for the term of three or five years, which time will enable us to form an estimate of the efficacy and utility of the institution. If experience shall prove it to be beneficial, I would then give to the King the power of filling up all future vacancies among the superior Commissioners. To the Court of Proprietors would be left the right of nomination at the inferior Board."

When he had thus developed the outlines of his proposed bill, and endeavoured to demonstrate its salutary operation if adopted, at the same time anticipating and replying to such objections as he conceived might be made to it, he proceeded:—"The situation of the country," observed he, "demands of a Minister not only vigorous measures, but even a degree of risk and superiority to personal considerations of danger. This is not a moment in which a Secretary of State can remain idle. Those who prefer indulgence before application may retire to private life. My office calls for exertion." Then reverting to his coalition with Lord North, he assured

the House that no material difference of opinion had arisen between him and his noble colleague during the past summer. The experiment of a mutual oblivion of past animosities and a cordial co-operation for the benefit of their country had fully succeeded. "On the present occasion I lament indeed," added he, "that illness and infirmity should deprive me of the great abilities possessed by that noble person, but I am authorised to declare that we perfectly coincide in sentiment respecting the subject now before Parliament; and as the bill must demand a certain time for its discussion, I trust I may still promise myself the benefit of his powerful support." As the strongest proof of Lord North's acquiescence in and approbation of the measure, Colonel North, his eldest son, seconded Fox's motion.

All eyes were then directed towards Pitt, who instantly rising, sarcastically remarked, that although Lord North was indisposed, yet he did not conceive any material impediment to public affairs would result from it, as the Secretary of State had demonstrated how competent he was to perform not only his own share of parliamentary business, but likewise the duties of his colleague. Relative to the bill now brought forward, he should suspend his judgment till it came fully before the House; adding, "Enormous abuses have been, no doubt, committed in the management of East India affairs; and enormous must they be if they can justify a measure which at once abrogates all the ancient charters or privileges granted to the Company since its first existence."—"Is it not the avowed principle of the bill just announced to place the whole power over our East India dominions in the hands of seven individuals who will derive their immediate appointment from the Minister himself? In that Minister will centre therefore prospectively the immense patronage of

those rich and extensive provinces. I am ready, as far as regards my own opinion, thus early to declare that the whole system of the Secretary of State appears to be absolute despotism on one side, and on the other the most gross corruption." These severe animadversions, however just they might be in themselves, could not, however, arrest the progress of the measure, which proceeded with unexampled rapidity through the Lower House of Parliament.

It is no longer possible, after a lapse of above thirty years, to deceive either ourselves or mankind relative to the nature, provisions, and effects of the bill in question. Its most determined enemies cannot dispute the energy, vigour, and decision which breathed through every clause, nor will candid men refuse to allow the beneficial tendency of many of its regulations. But neither can the friends of Fox, however they may idolise his memory, deny the unwarrantable spirit of ambition, rapacity, and confiscation by which it was equally distinguished in its leading features. The instant seizure of all the effects, papers, and possessions of a great chartered Company; the total extinction of the Court of Directors, who had long conducted its affairs; and the substitution of two new Boards named by the Ministry through the medium of Parliament for the future government of India—these measures, however their necessity might apparently be demonstrated, seemed rather revolutionary subversions of property by arbitrary authority than suited to the mild, moderate, and equitable spirit of the British constitution. Other features of the bill appeared still more open to objection, since they evidently vested in Administration, and therefore in Fox as the Ministerial leader, a power independent of the sovereign. Such in particular might be esteemed



the clause which ultimately extended the duration of the Act to four years, a term exceeding the possible period to which the existence of the House of Commons then sitting could be protracted, they having already entered on their fourth session.

Many other regulations growing out of the bill or connected with the measure excited just alarm. Even in the subsequent selection of the seven Commissioners, who were to be appointed for the future administration of the East India Company's affairs at home and abroad, Fox's ascendancy over his colleague was clearly defined; Lord Fitzwilliam, as the personal representative of the deceased Marquis of Rockingham, being placed at the head of the Board; while Mr. Frederick Montagu, another most respectable adherent of the same political party, stood second in the list. Colonel North, Viscount Lewisham, and Sir Gilbert Elliott, the three next Commissioners, represented Lord North's interest and connections. No division was attempted on any of these names, but I well remember the general laughter excited through the Opposition ranks when Colonel North was proposed. Indeed, Fox was so well aware of the sneers or comments to which that nomination would give rise, that he anticipated them in his speech on the occasion. But in order to secure at once the majority of voices, together with the efficient control of the Board itself, Sir Henry Fletcher, one of the representatives for the county of Cumberland, who in the year preceding had been raised to the dignity of a baronet by the Marquis of Rockingham, and Mr. Robert Gregory, member for Rochester, were added to the number. Both these last-named individuals, well known for their devoted attachment to Fox and possessing seats in the House of Commons, having likewise in their own persons recently and repeat-

edly filled the highest situations in the East India direction, it was obvious must be resorted to as guides, on account of their local knowledge and experience in the Company's concerns. No measures, it must be owned, could have been more ably concerted for bringing under Ministerial influence, and for permanently retaining under their subjection, the immense patronage and all the sources of power or of emolument connected with India, while, on the other hand, it was well understood that the first employments civil and military, from the post of Governor-General of Bengal or Commander-in-Chief at Calcutta, down to the seats in Council at Madras and at Bombay, were already promised or filled up, principally with members of Parliament distinguished for their adherence to Administration. The names of the individuals destined for these high situations became circulated in every company, and as many of them were better known among the club at Brookes's than in Leadenhall Street, the consciousness of all India being speedily subjected to their rapacious hands, by no means tended to reconcile or to tranquillise the public mind.

[*20th November 1783.*] Happily for the British constitution, the activity and energy of Opposition seemed to keep pace with the bold policy and ambition of the Secretary. Mr. William Grenville,<sup>1</sup> then member for the town of Buckingham, and youngest of three brothers who have all filled with distinction some of the highest employments of state under the reign of George III., came eminently forward on the present momentous occasion.

<sup>1</sup> William Wyndham Grenville, born in 1759, Speaker of the House of Commons, on his resignation raised to the peerage as Lord Grenville in 1790. He married the Hon. Anne Pitt, sister and heiress of Thomas, last Lord Camelford, 18th July 1792. In 1806 he formed a coalition with Fox, and became the nominal head of the "All the Talents" Ministry.—ED.

In a speech of great length and greater ability he gave promise of those vigorous powers of mind which he has since unfolded in the Upper House of Parliament, both in and out of office. He wanted, indeed, the commanding tone, the majesty, and all the captivating rotundity, as well as splendour of Pitt's eloquence, but in solidity of argument, in depth of thought, and the qualities that constitute a statesman, he might be thought to equal his distinguished relative. Having pointed out in the most convincing terms the rapacity, despotism, and personal aggrandisement which lay concealed behind the ostensible regulations of reform in Fox's bill—having endeavoured to unmask the attempt made to hoodwink and deceive the House by nominating Commissioners who would look only to the Minister and not to the sovereign for the duration of their power, he demanded "by whom has a plan so pregnant with ruin to the constitution been originated and matured? By the very man whose voice has during many years been loudest in declaring that the influence of the crown is excessive and big with danger to the liberties of the country." In language more measured and wholly destitute of classic ornament, but not less calculated by its very brevity to impress his audience, Jenkinson stated the measure projected "as setting up within the realm a species of executive authority which would be independent of all control on the part of the sovereign." Nor did he fail to expose and to denounce the audacious spirit of legislation which could propose a plan so subversive of every principle on which rest the liberties of England. Two individuals who have risen in our time to the highest honours and dignities of the bar, Scott and Erskine,<sup>1</sup> both, I believe, first presented

<sup>1</sup> Scott (afterwards Lord Eldon) was at this time in his thirty-second, and Erskine in his thirty-first year. Both had *worked* their  
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themselves on that evening to the notice of the House, but on opposite sides—the former attacking, the latter defending Fox's bill. Scarcely any impression of the speech pronounced by Scott remains on my mind or memory, except a general idea of calmness and candour which characterised it. One only sentiment has survived in my recollection, when he strikingly observed that "though Ministers, by the words which they had put into his Majesty's mouth at the opening of the session, had called upon Parliament to deliberate, yet it was now obvious that instead of consulting on the affairs of India, the Secretary of State had only convoked them for the purpose of decision."

Fox, in his reply, while he treated Scott with great marks of consideration, and even of respect for his talents, as well as for the temperate mode in which he had delivered his opinions, exhausted on Jenkinson the severest epithets of reproach. "I well anticipated," exclaimed he, "long before they were uttered, the observations which would proceed from that quarter. When I first heard the doctrine broached of separating the crown from its Ministers and treating them as divided interests, I instantly foresaw who would take the lead on the present evening. Such doctrines could originate from no other individual. When the measures of Government call for censure or punishment, then, indeed, I admit Ministers are solely responsible; but in almost every other point of view nothing can be more invidious or false than to make such a distinction." Pitt, notwithstanding, who doubtless already knew the ground, pressed the Secretary of State upon this tender subject with redoubled force. Having remarked on the inconsistency and contradiction of

way to distinction. Scott sat for Weobly; Erskine, who had served in both the army and navy, was member for Portsmouth.—D.

Fox's assertion respecting the unity of the sovereign and his Ministers, "We hope, indeed," added he, "that they do materially differ. Whenever Administration passes the limits of justice and of moderation, we trust that we shall always be able clearly to distinguish the Minister from the sovereign. The Secretary has exerted much ingenuity in attempting to conciliate and blend two powers which are in themselves distinct. I can, however, discover no reason for his introducing the present bill at so early a period of the session, and pressing it forward through the House without allowing it a full discussion, except the design of settling Ministers in the enjoyment of unlimited and absolute power." It was evident by these expressions how imprudently Fox had acted in bringing forward a measure which, besides its rapacious features and its arbitrary spirit, enabled his opponents to accuse him, not without good reason, of labouring to build up his own greatness and to cement his own power at the expense of the prince whom he served. He thus opened with his own hands the political abyss in which he was eventually swallowed up. So blind is ambition, unless regulated and restrained by judgment as well as moderation! Irritated at the motives imputed by Pitt and his friends to Administration in framing the East India Bill, Burke rose towards the close of the debate, rather to indulge his spleen and to vent his anger than to apply to Pitt's arguments the touchstone of reason. "Those arguments," he said, "came not from the head, but from the heart, and therefore neither merited nor were capable of receiving any answer. The Ministerial opponents knew their own base motives, for which reason they attributed to others the feelings by which they were themselves animated." No division however as yet took place, and the bill proceeded forward with un-

exampled rapidity, while every other topic of conversation throughout the metropolis, and I might almost say throughout the kingdom, was suspended in the contemplation of this new as well as comprehensive measure.

[27th November 1783.] Both sides meanwhile prepared for the greatest exertions, and it was evident that Ministers, secure of a decided majority in each House of Parliament, dreaded nothing except delay. But the heads of Opposition had already found effectual means to inform the sovereign of his danger and to rouse him to resistance, though its effects were not immediately perceptible. Fox, confident in the superiority of his numbers, which circumstance he thought he had well ascertained, and instructed by all past experience since the period of the Revolution of 1688, that no British sovereign could venture to oppose himself personally against the representatives of the people sustained by the peers, only calculated the time which his bill would demand in its passage. He did not sufficiently reflect that he had lost in great measure the popular support without having acquired the favour of the crown. Nor did he seem to have justly appreciated the general disapprobation, or rather detestation, which the East India Bill eventually excited through all ranks of society. On these powerful auxiliaries, though hitherto not fully matured, Pitt confidently counted. Never, on any occasion, did Fox display the vast capacities of memory, lucid arrangement of ideas, and facilities of clothing his matter in language of energy and effect, with which nature had endowed him, more fully than on the second reading of his bill. Having endeavoured by a series of arithmetical reasonings, founded, as he asserted, on the accounts presented by the East India Company at the bar of the

House with the view of showing their solvency, to prove that they were, on the contrary, in a state of distress approaching to bankruptcy, Fox added, "I well know that in bringing forward the present measure I expose my own Ministerial situation to hazard; but when, on great national grounds, I can establish a system at once salutary as well as useful to this country and to India, I value little the personal risks that I may encounter. If I fall, I shall fall in a great and glorious struggle, not only for the welfare of the Company, but for the benefit of the people of Britain and of Hindostan."

Lord North, who had hitherto been absent from the House ever since the commencement of the session, attended in his place on that evening, seated by Fox's side. He even spoke at considerable length in support of the bill, but, as I thought, without his usual animation and powers of persuasion or entertainment. Not a scintillation of that wit which so often electrified or delighted his hearers pervaded his speech; and though it displayed great ability, the understanding seemed to dictate all he uttered, rather than conviction or inclination. Pitt, on the other hand, fastened like a vulture on the Secretary's measure, which he held up to the abhorrence of all mankind, as "the most desperate and alarming attempt to exercise tyranny which ever disgraced the annals of this or of any other country." "Is the pretended relief," exclaimed he, "which we are to administer in Asia to be grounded on injustice and violence in Europe? I pledge myself to the world at large to point out the fatal operation of this bill on everything sacred or dear to Englishmen, to prove its inimical influence on our constitution and liberties, and to establish by incontrovertible evidence the false and pernicious principles on which it is founded. But all these particulars

necessarily demand time, which the indecent as well as unprecedented precipitancy of the business virtually proscribes."—"The Secretary has passed in review the statements made by the Company and the accounts presented at the bar with a rapidity which renders comprehension difficult and detection almost impossible. For this, as well as for many other reasons, I trust there can be no objection to defer the debate for a single day, in order that the falsehood of the assertions made may be rendered manifest to every comprehension." Vainly, however, were any reclamations addressed to Ministers, who dreaded, above all things, the operation of delay; and who, after having taken the Cabinet by storm, were now impatient to secure their possession of power beyond the reach of accident or fortune. Fox refusing to postpone the discussion even for a few hours, the division took place, which, as being the first trial of strength on the East India Bill, excited no little expectation. It proved a triumph to the Coalition, and seemed to set at defiance all further opposition within the walls of that House of Parliament; Administration carrying with them 229 votes, while the minority did not exceed 120. Under these prosperous but fallacious appearances terminated the month of November.

[*December 1783.*] Fox himself gave, indeed, the strongest indication of his own apprehensions from the interposition of delay by the haste, not to say the precipitation, with which he propelled the bill through the House of Commons. Notwithstanding the opposition given to it in every stage by Pitt and his friends, in defiance of petitions presented from the proprietors as well as from the Directors of the East India Company, and equally contrary to the general sentiment of the capital no less than to the almost



unanimous voice of the nation, which soon began to manifest itself, Fox pushed forward the measure with indecent ardour. Scarcely three weeks elapsed from the time of his moving for leave to bring in the bill on the 18th of November to his appearance at the bar of the House of Peers on the 9th of December, when he presented it in person, *magna medius comitante caterva*, after its having passed the House of Commons. An ordinary turnpike, canal, or enclosure bill, if opposed in its principles or progress, might have taken longer time than did this gigantic experiment to render Administration in some measure independent of the crown and of the people. Yet so well had the Secretary meditated his plan, such was the parliamentary strength possessed by the Coalition, and such the ascendancy of Fox over the Lower House, that upon every division he carried the question by a vast superiority of numbers, generally exceeding the proportion of two to one. On the question of going into the committee, which took place on the 1st of December, I quitted Lord North, whom I had commonly supported up to that time, and joined the minority, conceiving it to be, upon every view of the subject, improper longer to adhere to a Minister who seemed to have forsaken himself.

The consternation which Fox's bill occasioned in Leadenhall Street, among that description of men against whom its provisions were known to be peculiarly levelled, was commonly, though erroneously, said to have proved fatal to Sir William James, who died very suddenly just at this time.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, true that he was seized with an indisposition while sitting in the House of Com-

<sup>1</sup> William James, of Eltham, was created a Baronet in 1778, and died in December 1783. He was for a time commander of the East India Company's merchant service.—ED.

mons during the progress of the East India Bill, which compelled him instantly to return home; but he recovered in a certain degree the attack, though he never afterwards quitted his own house. His death took place instantaneously, during the performance of the ceremony of his only daughter's marriage with the late Lord Rancliff, then Mr. Boothby Parkyns.<sup>1</sup> I knew Sir William James with great intimacy, and discussed with him the probable results of the East India measure during the short interval which elapsed between his first seizure and the day of his decease, at his residence in Gerrard Street, Soho. His origin was so obscure as almost to baffle inquiry, and he had derived no advantage from education, but he possessed strong natural abilities, aided by a knowledge of mankind. Having been sent out early in life to Bombay in the East India Company's naval service, he there distinguished himself by commanding the memorable expedition undertaken against Angria the pirate, when we made ourselves masters of Fort Geriah, his principal establishment on the coast of the Concan. Returning to his native country after this successful enterprise, by which he acquired not only some fortune but considerable reputation, he rose to the first employments at the India House as a member of the Court of Directors, sat in successive Parliaments, was elevated by the friendship of the late Earl of Sandwich, when First Lord of the Admiralty, to the Baronetage, and had been elected Deputy-Master of the Trinity House in the preceding month of June, when Lord Keppel was chosen Master of that Corporation. Those persons who asserted that Fox's bill killed him

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Boothby Parkyns, born July 24, 1755. In 1783 he married the daughter and sole heiress of Sir William James, Bart. He was created an Irish peer by the title of Lord Rancliffe in 1795, and died in 1807.—ED.

seem to have forgotten that he had nearly attained his seventieth year when he expired. As his dissolution took place on the 16th of December, he had not the satisfaction to witness the rejection of that obnoxious measure by the House of Peers, which happened on the following day.

Never, probably, was so great a portion of intellect brought to bear upon one point or subject in so short a space of time as the House of Commons exhibited between the opening of the East India Bill and its triumphant arrival in the Upper House of Parliament. All the sources of argument, declamation, wit, and pathos were successively touched by master-hands. Every species of information enlightened the object under discussion; nor was any weapon of sophistry, humour, or even severe invective, left untried which might operate on the understanding, passions, and feelings of the audience. The salient points of debate were so many, so striking, and so animated as to defy the powers of memory, leaving on the hearer's mind only a confused recollection of their beauty, delicacy, or severity. History, ancient and modern, poetry, even Scripture, all were successively pressed into the service, or rendered subservient to the purposes of the contending parties. Will it be believed that the Apocalypse of St. John furnished images which, by a slight effort of imagination, or by an immaterial deviation from the original text, were made to typify Fox under the form of the "beast that rose up out of the sea, having seven heads"? Their application to the seven Commissioners appointed by the bill was at once so happy and so natural that it could not be mistaken, and stood in need of no explanation. The words which were made to designate the Secretary of State himself seemed almost to identify him by a very characteristic

feature—his bold eloquence: “And there was given to him a mouth speaking great things.” But in the duration of the power of the beast, as compared with that of the East India Bill, a difference of six months appeared; the Apocalypse stating that “power was given unto him to continue forty-and-two months,” whereas Fox’s bill comprehended forty-eight months, or four years. Pensions, peerages, and places were pointed out by the passage where it is said, “And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their forehead.”

Mr. Scott, who afterwards, as Lord Eldon, held the Great Seal, was the person by whom so curious an allusion was presented to the House, if I recollect right, on the third reading of the bill. But Sheridan, though he could not possibly anticipate an attack of such a nature, yet having contrived, in the course of the debate, to procure some leaves of the book of Revelation, with admirable ability found materials in that work equally suited to Fox’s defence or justification, transforming him from the “dragon and the beast,” under both which types he had been designated, to a species of angelic or tutelary being, by producing other quotations taken from St. John full as applicable in their tenor to the Secretary of State.

[*1st December 1783.*] The powers of mind exerted throughout the progress of the measure seemed to be concentrated in the memorable debate that took place upon sending the bill to a committee, which was opened by Powis. His beautiful and severe animadversion on its double author, a metaphor drawn likewise from Holy Writ, made a strong impression. “I hear, indeed,” said he, “the voice of Jacob,” meaning Fox, “but the hands are those of Esau.” Lord North, who was present at the

time, though much indisposed, quitted the House in the course of the evening, overcome with the immoderate heat. Powis did not hesitate to denominate the bill "the modern Babel, which already almost reached the clouds," while he compared Fox's treatment of the East India Company with "Shylock's demand of a pound of flesh, to be cut nearest the heart." He expressed, nevertheless, his personal respect for the Secretary, but added that he "wished to see him the servant, not the master, of his sovereign." No speech pronounced within the walls of the House of Commons throughout the whole proceedings, during the great experiment made by Ministers to consolidate their tenure of office, tended more to accelerate their downfall than did this appeal of Powis. He was neither a candidate for place, nor a courtier whose eyes were directed to St. James's, nor a lawyer looking to the dignities and preferments of Westminster Hall. As a country gentleman, representing an extensive county, he delivered with manly firmness his opinions, which were founded in common sense, couched in language of great force, rising at times to a pitch of affecting eloquence, and sustained by unimpeached probity. During the American war he had served with zeal and ability under Fox in the front ranks, had conducted by his active exertions to diminish the influence of the crown, and had greatly contributed to drive Lord North from the helm. But he now beheld the structure which he had lent all his efforts to overturn raised anew on more solid foundations, while "the man of the people was converted into the champion of influence." "If," said Powis, "the Secretary of State's moderation did not form a guarantee against his ambition, we might imagine him, when communing with himself, thus to express his intentions: 'I have, it is true, forced myself into

high employment by joining a man and a party whom, after successive years of parliamentary opposition, I had expelled from power. But by my junction with the noble Lord in the blue ribband I have lost much of my popularity. Still, as I have great influence throughout the country, sustained by powerful connections, I will make good use of my time. The Indies shall constitute the basis of my greatness. Availing myself of my present prosperity, I will construct a golden fortress in this new land of promise, which, by placing in it a select garrison of chosen and determined adherents, on whose zeal and attachment I may implicitly rely, I can render impregnable, a fortress which will not open its gates either to the summons of the people or to the commands of the sovereign.' For God's sake let us unite to crush this awful pile before it swells to such a size as to leave no room for the other component parts of the British constitution! Already scarce a vestige of the East India Company is to be traced; and if the present bill passes, we shall consign the glory, the dignity, and the liberties of our country to ultimate as well as certain destruction."

Burke, unable longer to observe silence after such reflections, then rose, and, in a dissertation rather than a speech, which lasted more than three hours, exhausted all the powers of his mighty mind in the justification of his friend's measure. The most ignorant member of the House, who had attended to the mass of information, historical, political, and financial, which fell from the lips of Burke on that occasion, must have departed rich in knowledge of Hindostan. It seemed impossible to crowd greater variety of matter applicable to the subject into a smaller compass; and those who differed most widely from him in opinion did not render the less justice to his gigantic range of ideas, his lucid exposition of

events, and the harmonic flow of his periods. There were portions of this harangue in which he appeared to be animated by feelings and considerations the most benign as well as elevated; and the classic language in which he made Fox's panegyric for having dared to venture on a measure so beset with dangers, but so pregnant, as he asserted, with benefits to mankind, could not be exceeded in beauty.

Indeed, if I were compelled to name the finest composition pronounced in the House of Commons during the whole time that I remained a member of that assembly, from 1780 to 1794, I should select this speech of Burke. Nor can I be suspected of partiality either towards the author or the production. The former, though he excited admiration by his genius, was too much the slave of his own prejudices, too implacable, petulant, irascible, and impervious to reason on many subjects, to awaken general good-will or to conciliate affection. To the whole system which his arguments were meant to support I was decidedly hostile. Yet I did not on these accounts render less justice to the matchless powers of intellect which matured so wonderful an effusion. Far from suffering by a comparison with the orations of the greatest ancient masters, Greek or Roman, I believe it would gain on an impartial examination. Among the passages of peculiar beauty might be named his picture of the young men sent out from England to India in order to amass sudden wealth. "Animated," said he, "with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuous ardour of youth, they roll in, one after another, wave after wave, while nothing presents itself to the view of the unhappy natives except an interminable prospect of new flights of voracious birds of passage, with appetites insatiable for a food which is continually wasting under their attacks. Every

other conqueror, Arab, Tartar, or Persian, has left behind him some monument either of royal splendour or of useful beneficence. England has erected neither churches, nor hospitals, nor schools, nor palaces. If to-morrow we were expelled from Hindostan, nothing would remain to indicate that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion by any better tenants than the ourang-outang or the tiger." This fine burst of imagination, even though I consider it to be much too highly coloured, and even false in some particulars, yet presents one of the most vivid assemblages of animated life ever submitted to the human understanding, while it appeals to the best feelings of our nature.

Burke's eulogium of Mr. Francis (afterwards Sir Philip), whether we acquiesce in its exact accuracy of resemblance or not, cannot be perused without admiration. Yet was it exceeded by his portrait of Fox, whom Burke compared with the lawgivers of antiquity while legislating for India, and despising every personal consideration in order to 'diffuse felicity over distant portions of the earth. "He is well aware," added Burke, "of the snares which are spread in his path from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has hazarded his ease, his security, his power, and his popularity in the present noble attempt. This is the road which all heroes have trod before him. He will recollect that obloquy constitutes a necessary ingredient in the composition of glory. He will recollect that it was not only in the Roman customs, but is in the nature and constitution of things for calumny to accompany triumph." However elegantly classic might be these allusions, and whatever magic might pervade the whole of Burke's discourse, or however persuaded he was of the



reality of all the predicted advantages that would flow from the measure, the moral effect of his speech in producing conviction by no means corresponded with the admiration which it excited.

Fox, who reserved himself on that night to answer Dundas and Pitt, rose at a late hour and spoke with his usual ability. "A charter," observed he, "is only a trust for some given benefit. If abused, it may and ought to be resumed. Sovereigns are sacred; yet, with all my reverence and attachment towards them, had I lived under the reign of James II., I should certainly have contributed my efforts in those illustrious struggles which rescued us from hereditary servitude and recorded the doctrine that trust abused is revocable." On Thomas Pitt, who, when alluding to the East India Bill, had asserted that "it was a measure which might be naturally expected from a coalition of two men, who having first seized by force on the Government, evidently intended to finish their career by dealing a death-blow to their country," the Secretary animadverted in terms of more than ordinary asperity. "I will tell that honourable gentleman," said Fox, looking him steadily in the face, "that the men who have brought forward this bill are not to be browbeaten by studied gesture nor terrified by tremulous tones, solemn phrases, or hard epithets. To arguments they are ready to reply. He charges us with having seized upon the Government. His Majesty changed his Ministers last April, as he did twelve months earlier, each time in consequence of a vote of this House. So his predecessors did; and his successors will, I doubt not, imitate the example. The votes of Parliament always have, and always will, I trust, decide on the duration of Ministry. Such is the nature of our constitution."

Then addressing himself to the House at large,

"A double game," exclaimed Fox, "is playing on this occasion by Opposition, to which, I hope, this assembly and the whole kingdom will pay attention. It is attempted to injure Administration through two channels at the same time,—through a certain great quarter and through the people. To the former they assert that the present bill increases the influence of Ministers against the crown, while they persuade the nation that it augments the power of the sovereign to their injury. That they will fail in both these experiments I have no doubt. In the great quarter, I trust, they are well understood, because the princely mind of that elevated personage forms a security against their devices. They will speedily dissipate by their conduct any temporary illusion which they may have spread among the multitude." Nor was Fox less severe in his remarks upon Jenkinson than he had been when commenting on Thomas Pitt. The former of those gentlemen being seated near William Pitt on the Opposition bench, as was likewise Dundas, "When I behold," observed the Secretary, "the right honourable gentleman now surrounded by the objects of his early and hereditary aversion, and hear him revile the Coalition, I am lost in amazement at his inconsistency. Well may my noble friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer assert that we never sought to attain power by cabal or intrigue. The safest path to royal as well as to popular favour is by reducing the burdens and restoring the glory of the nation." Then fixing his eyes on Jenkinson, "Let those persons," said he, "who aim at office through other channels, by mysterious and inscrutable means, speak out. If they will not, the country must perceive that their arts cannot bear examination, and that their safety lies in their obscurity. The principles which we profess are thoroughly

known. With them I prefer to perish, rather than maintain myself by adopting others." After endeavouring to do away the effect of Powis's soliloquy, which seemed deeply to affect him, Fox concluded by addressing his last words to Pitt, who in the course of a most able speech had declared that "he would stake his character with the public on the dangerous nature and tendency of the bill under discussion." "I meet him," said the Secretary, "in his own terms of defiance, and I oppose him, character against character. I stake upon the excellence of the present measure all that is most dear to men, talents, honour, present reputation, and future fame. All these I risk on the constitutional safety, the enlarged policy, the equity, and the wisdom of the bill." There were persons who thought that, under all the circumstances of the case, the stake was by no means equal, and that it resembled the armour of Diomed when weighed in value against that of Glaucus. The division, however, which took place at a very late hour, fully equalled the expectation of Ministers, being more than two to one. Ayes, 217; Noes, 103. So numerous and flattering a support, which proved how well the Secretary had prepared the ground, only accelerated the final catastrophe.

[*8th December 1783.*] On the third reading of the bill, a new auxiliary appeared on the side of Opposition in the person of Mr. John James Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> since raised by Pitt to the dignity of a marquis, who, having taken his seat only a few days preceding as a member of the House, opened the debate in a speech of considerable ability. Wilkes drew, however, far more attention, not only by the decided

<sup>1</sup> M.P. for East Looe, Cornwall; born in 1756. He succeeded his uncle as ninth Earl of Abercorn in 1789, and was created Marquis of Abercorn in 1790.—ED.

part which he took against the measure itself, but by the classic, nervous, and pointed terms in which he inveighed against its fabricators. "No epithet," said he, "can reach the enormity of its guilt, and I shall therefore content myself with characterising it as a swindling bill, drawn and presented by the Secretary of State to obtain money on false pretences. I consider it as the bitter fruit of the Coalition; for, after the lamentable consequences that resulted from the infraction of the American charters by the noble Lord in the blue ribband, I believe he would never have ventured to attack the franchises and property of a great chartered Company if he had not connected himself in impious league with so daring a colleague. When he had secured a fitting accomplice, the plan and share of the plunder being previously adjusted, it was resolved between them to rob the East India Company. I protest that I nourish no ill-will personally to either of the Secretaries of State; but I deprecate and dread the unnatural, incongruous union of two individuals, who never could have been brought to coalesce except for the division of the public spoils and for the partition of all power among themselves, to be followed by the destruction of public freedom and the independence of this assembly. The noble Lord possesses, I believe, the most unspotted integrity, but love of place combining with indolence of natural disposition led him throughout the whole progress of the American contest to connive at men in public office fleecing the state beyond the example of former times. His own hands were clean, but not so those of his dependants. As a private nobleman, he is formed to be admired and beloved. To a rich vein of elegant, brilliant, and classic wit he joins easy manners, unaffected suavity of temper, and every amiable or companionable quality. Would to

Heaven I could commend his reverence for the constitution, his love of freedom, and his zeal for the preservation of those privileges and franchises which constitute the birthright of Englishmen!"

This accurate and admirable portrait, sketched by the hand of a master who well knew the original, was followed by an apostrophe to Fox, not less calculated to attract attention. "With the present colleague of that noble Lord," continued Wilkes, "I have acted during many sessions in hostility to him. By his side I fought in all the struggles to repress the power of the crown. With what admiration have I listened to his manly eloquence, sustained by the powers of argument and reason! So perfect a parliamentary debater this assembly has never beheld. I grieve when I reflect how unavailing have been all our efforts to prevent the dismemberment of so large a portion of the empire; but I am indignant when I see the noble Lord occupying one of the highest employments, reconducted to power, nay, caressed and cherished, by the very man who solemnly engaged to impeach him as the great criminal of state, the corrupter of Parliament, the author and contriver of our national destruction."

From every quarter of the House the keenest shafts were aimed at the measure, some of which penetrated deep, while others only appeared to graze on the surface, but all left their impression. While Pitt, powerfully sustained by William Grenville and Dundas, attacked it with the arms of reason, others tried the operation of irony and ridicule. Arden,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Richard Pepper Arden, born in 1745; appointed Solicitor-General on November 7, 1782, and elected M.P. for Newtown, in the Isle of Wight. He was again appointed Solicitor-General in December 1783, and on March 31, 1784, he succeeded Kenyon as Attorney-General, and in 1788 he again succeeded him as Master of the Rolls. In 1784 he was returned to Parliament for Aldborough, in Yorkshire, and in 1790 and 1796 he represented Hastings and Bath respectively. In May

who soon afterwards became Solicitor-General on the change of Ministry, clung to it through every stage with great pertinacity and spirit, not unaccompanied by legal ability. The seven Commissioners and their eight assistant-directors were compared by Wilberforce to as many doctors and apothecaries summoned for the purpose of putting the patient, the East India Company, to death according to the rules of art. Many members, long accustomed to consider Fox as the star by which they guided their political course, covered him on this occasion with reproaches or maledictions. Martin, a man who, though not distinguished by superior intellectual parts, yielded to none in probity, invoked curses on the Coalition as the grave of all principle. "When once the present bill is passed," said he, "men who think and act independently may spare themselves the trouble of coming down to this assembly. I will, however, steadily oppose it, as I have done in every former stage, till it is sent up to the peers. I trust they will esteem it utterly inconsistent either with their justice or with their dignity to pass such a bill. But even if it should be otherwise, one hope is still left us. I mean, that his Majesty will refuse his assent to so pernicious a measure." Martin did not hesitate to declare that neither Sir George Savile nor Sir Charles Turner, the latter of whom was already dead, and the former lay extenuated by diseases which speedily conducted him to the grave, would, had they been present, have lent any countenance or support to the East India Bill.

1801 he was made Lord Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas, and created Lord Alvanley. He died on 19th March 1804. Both in this place and farther on in the book Wraxall does scant justice to Pepper Arden's abilities. Foss describes him as a good lawyer and a conscientious administrator of justice. He was sometimes irritable, and his name was punned upon, and the nickname "Poivre Ardent" (cayenne pepper) given to him; but he had many friends, and the bar said that, in spite of some blunders, he was always right at last.—ED.

Sir Richard Hill,<sup>1</sup> to whom Scripture was familiar, compared the Secretary's conduct in affecting to protect and caress the East India Company while he immolated them to his ambition, with the treachery of Joab to Amasa, who, at the moment that he pretended to embrace him, stabbed him to the heart. "If," added Sir Richard, "I might present a gift to him who will have extended at his feet the whole patronage of the East, and who by this bill will be rendered greater than any Oriental nabob: if the Secretary would deign to accept from my hands so small a boon as a motto, I will venture to offer him, 'Non sum qualis eram.'" In more homely language, destitute of adventitious ornament, Sir Cecil Wray declared that the measure impressed him with horror from its enormity, corruption, and pernicious consequences to the state. Some of the finest passages of Shakespeare, taken from his "*Julius Cæsar*," were applied by Scott and Arden to Fox, as the new dictator, with extraordinary effect. Powis accused the Secretary with deceiving himself and the House by professions of zeal and disinterestedness, which served only as a cover to his ambitious designs. "He still persists," said Powis, "to maintain the purity of his political principles and to bid his deluded countrymen confide in his fair promises. But I form my judgment by measures, not by men. And by that criterion I mean to try all the supporters of the present enormous measure, which aims a mortal blow at the independence of Parliament." Jenkinson, temperately, but in language of energy, depicted the unconstitutional nature of the power thus attempted to be set up, which must prove subversive

<sup>1</sup> Sir Richard Hill, Bart., brother to the Rev. Rowland Hill and uncle to the gallant Lord Hill, was born at Hawkstone, Salop, in 1733. He represented the county of Salop in Parliament from 1780 until within about a year of his death, which took place in November 1808.—ED.

of the royal prerogative ; and from opposite sides Fox was assailed as the enemy of his country, who sacrificed to his insatiable ambition the fame, the character, and the consideration that he had attained by a long series of public services.

Not that he by any means wanted defenders distinguished for integrity as well as by legal and parliamentary ability. Erskine spoke repeatedly at great length during the progress of the bill in support of the obnoxious measure. His enemies pronounced his performances tame and destitute of the animation which so powerfully characterised his speeches in Westminster Hall. They maintained that, however resplendent he appeared as an advocate while addressing a jury, he fell to the level of an ordinary man, if not below it, when seated on the Ministerial bench, where another species of oratory was demanded to impress conviction or to extort admiration. To me who, having never witnessed his jurisprudential talents, could not make any such comparison, he appeared to exhibit shining powers of declamation. Lee, the Attorney-General, in a speech replete with that coarse, strong, and illiberal species of invective which usually accompanied his addresses to the House, and which always appeared to me more befitting the Robin Hood Society<sup>1</sup> than accommodated to a legislative assembly, treated with indignant contempt the repugnance manifested to violate the charter of the East India Company. He did not even hesitate to describe that charter, esteemed by many members so sacred, and incapable of subversion except by arbitrary violence, as "a mere skin of parchment to which was appended a seal of wax." This imprudent, if not censurable declaration, coming from such a quarter, however qualified or palliated it might be by subsequent ex-

<sup>1</sup> A debating society in existence at the end of last century,—ED.



planations, operated injuriously to Ministers. With the same contumelious levity he spoke of his office, which, he said, "he valued not a rush;" adding, "My learned friend (Arden) should have it to-morrow, if I did not conceive that by continuing to hold it I can be of some utility to Administration." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, irritated at the severe animadversions made by Thomas Pitt on the violence with which Administration had seized on the reins of Government, denied the charge with much indignation. Lord John's eloquence fell, however, far short of his feelings, and was addressed rather to the moral sense of his auditors than it appealed to their understandings or to their judgment.

General Burgoyne, arriving post from Ireland (spontaneously, as he asserted), and quitting the meaner duties of Commander-in-chief, which employment he held in that kingdom, in order to fulfil his higher obligations as a legislator at Westminster, spoke warmly in favour of the bill. Having, many years earlier, acted as chairman of one of the first committees appointed by the House for inquiring into the affairs of the East, he was heard with attention. He confirmed all the horrors and enormities attributed by Burke to the Europeans who governed Asia—atrocities which the General illustrated by a citation prepared for the purpose, extracted from the Sixth *Æneid* of Virgil, descriptive of the guilt of a powerful criminal, such as Hastings might be esteemed, condemned for his crimes on earth to undergo the pains of Tartarus. It did not, however, impress the House with the force of Arden's line from Shakespeare, directed to Fox—

"It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;"

or as Wilberforce's invocation to the Secretary of

State under the character of the fallen angel furnished by Milton. I remember Burke addressing Lord North, when First Minister, in somewhat similar terms shortly before his resignation, early in 1782. Rigby, professing an equal contempt for quotations from Shakespeare or from Milton, and expressing his admiration at hearing Scripture fall from the lips of a lawyer, with none of which materials for debate, he said, that he came provided, yet professed to have furnished himself with some arguments applicable to the subject under discussion. Without circumlocution or any false scruples of fastidious delicacy, he declared his utter disregard of the chartered rights of the Company, which he said he considered "as a bugbear only fit to intimidate children." He even advised their violation as the primary step to all reform in the administration of India.

No individual distinguished himself more throughout the whole progress of these interesting proceedings than Sheridan, whose matchless endowments of mind, equally adapted to contests of wit or of argument, and ever under the control of imperturbable temper, enabled him to extend invaluable assistance to the Minister. But neither was Fox wanting to himself or to his friends. On the contrary, performing every function of a general and of a private soldier, combating in the front ranks, leaving no charge unrepelled, no insinuation unnoticed, no argument unrefuted, he filled with astonishment as well as with admiration even those who thought themselves best able to appreciate the magnitude and extent of his parliamentary talents. After defending his bill from the severe attacks of Pitt, he did not disdain or omit to answer the allegations made by various members of inferior weight. To Powis, to Scott, to Dundas, and even to Martin, he

severally directed the most pointed replies, calculated to justify him, not only as a Minister, but in his individual and moral capacity. Determined on carrying through the bill without a moment's delay, apprehensive of new obstacles arising every hour within as well as without the walls of the House, and seeming to regard Parliament as convoked, not for the purpose of deliberation, but of decision, he refused to postpone the measure even for a single night. Vainly Scott adjured him in the language of Desdemona to Othello, "Kill me not to-night, my lord! let me live but one day!" The House, towards two o'clock in the morning, became so clamorous for the question, that a division was on the point of taking place, when an unexpected incident prolonged the discussion and arrested the universal impatience of the assembly.

Henry Flood, one of the most celebrated orators in the Irish Parliament, who had just been brought in for the city of Winchester, rising suddenly for the first time, prepared to speak in the British House of Commons. His appearance produced an instant calm, and he was heard with universal curiosity while he delivered his sentiments, which were strongly inimical to the East India Bill. Though possessing little local or accurate information on the immediate subject of debate, he spoke with great ability and good sense; but the slow, measured, and sententious style of enunciation which characterised his eloquence, however calculated to excite admiration it might be in the senate of the sister kingdom, appeared to English ears cold, stiff, and deficient in some of the best recommendations to attention. Unfortunately, too, for Flood, one of his own countrymen, Courtenay, instantly opened on him such a battery of ridicule and wit, seasoned with allusions or reflections of the most personal and painful kind,

as seemed to overwhelm the new member. He made no attempt at reply, and under these circumstances began the division. It formed a triumphant exhibition of Ministerial strength, the Coalition numbering 208, while only 102 persons, of whom I was one, followed Pitt into the lobby. Yet, within twelve days afterwards, Pitt found himself First Minister, and so remained for above seventeen years. Meanwhile the Secretary never relaxed his exertions, till, having surmounted all opposition, he carried up the bill, accompanied by a vast number of his adherents, who participated in his success, to the bar of the House of Peers. Its passage through that assembly being already secured, as he justly conceived, on solid grounds, and the royal negative never exciting any apprehension, the measure seemed apparently to be placed beyond the reach of fortune.

[9th—17th December 1783.] But with the arrival of the East India Bill in the House of Lords terminated, nevertheless, the prosperous career of Ministers. The King, whose opinions and wishes, however they might have been suspected by, or even known to, a few persons, were not as yet publicly divulged or clearly ascertained, now coming forward as the urgency of the occasion seemed to demand, communicated through authentic channels his utter disapprobation of the measure. Lord Temple,<sup>1</sup> though one of the first individuals thus authorised, formed by no means the sole or exclu-

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards first Marquis of Buckingham. Pending the division on the bill, George III. is said to have expressed to Lord Temple his disapproval of the measure, and to have authorised him to declare the same to such persons as he might choose. A written note was also put into Temple's hands, in which the King declared "that he should deem those who should vote for the bill, not only not his friends, but his enemies; and that if he, Lord Temple, could put this in stronger words, he had full authority to do so." In consequence of this direct interference, the bill was rejected by the Lords (Dec. 17, 1783) on a division of 95 to 76. See *Monthly Review*, xcii. (1820), p. 202.—ED.





sive medium through which the royal pleasure was so signified and circulated. Very little time, in fact, remained to the sovereign if he desired to avert the impending misfortune. For the Secretary of State, who seems to have been well aware that as soon as the measure was felt and understood it would excite universal alarm, had betimes secured such a majority in the Upper House as must speedily have left to the crown no possible mode of relief except one scarcely known to the British constitution since the Revolution of 1688, namely, a refusal of the royal assent to the bill after its passage through both Houses of Parliament. In this critical juncture his Majesty caused such arguments or expostulations to be offered to many members of the House of Lords, spiritual as well as temporal, and the necessity of resistance was so strongly depicted by his emissaries, as to overturn all Fox's machinery in an instant. Proxies given to the Minister were suddenly revoked; and after first leaving the Administration in a minority of eight upon the question of adjournment, the bill itself was subsequently rejected two days later by nineteen votes: 171 peers voted on the occasion, either in person or by proxy; a prodigious attendance if we consider the limited numbers of the British peerage at that time.

The Archbishops of Canterbury and of York (Moore and Markham) led the way, though the former prelate, whose connections, political and matrimonial, seemed to connect him with the Coalition, had been previously regarded as a firm supporter of the measure. The latter, who was not less an accomplished courtier than a profound scholar, throughout life always kept his eye constantly fixed on the throne. Nor can it excite surprise that all those noble individuals, without exception, who occu-

pled situations in the royal household or near the King's person should, without fastidiously hesitating, give the example of tergiversation. The greater number among them had only assented to the East India Bill on the supposition and under the belief that it had received the previous concurrence or approbation of his Majesty. They abandoned Ministers and joined the crown, manifesting by their votes how vast is the personal influence of the sovereign, when strenuously exerted, over the members of the Upper House of Parliament. The Prince of Wales, who had only taken the oaths and his seat in that assembly on the first day of the session, the 11th of November, when it was moved to adjourn on the 15th of December had voted in person with the Administration ; but having received a notification of his father's disapprobation of the East India Bill, as well as of the whole proceedings of Ministers, he absented himself on the second division, when that measure was finally rejected. Lord Rivers, one of the Lords of the King's Bedchamber, who had given his vote by proxy to the Coalition on the first question, withdrew it on the second division ; as did the Earls of Hardwicke and of Egremont. Lord Stormont, though a member of the Cabinet and President of the Council, had personally supported the bill on the 15th, when he considered it to have the sanction of the crown, yet voted on the other side forty-eight hours afterwards. His uncle, the Earl of Mansfield, who was supposed to have influenced him in this determination, exhibited in his own person the same example. Both were present in the first division as supporters of the measure, and both appeared in the House as enemies to it when thrown out on the 17th of December. The Earl of Oxford, one of his Majesty's most ancient servants, who had been near his person more than twenty years



in the capacity of a Lord of the Bedchamber, having been induced to support the Coalition by his proxy on the 15th, sent it to the opposite side on the subsequent division. Fox and Burke, together with many of their warmest adherents, who during the progress of the first debate had remained on the steps of the throne, in order by their presence to encourage their friends in the Upper House, had the mortification to witness the defeat experienced on that evening ;—a defeat which served as a warning of its final destiny.

The debates which took place in the Upper House on the two questions of adjournment and rejection, however inferior an interest they excited when compared with the discussions that agitated the House of Commons on the same subject, yet strongly arrested national attention. Lord Thurlow, after reproaching the bill and treating with contemptuous ridicule the reports of the "Select Committee," on which defective or erroneous foundation the pretended necessity for the measure rested, declared that "if it passed, the King would in fact take the diadem from his own head and place it on the head of Mr. Fox."<sup>1</sup> In more intemperate language, scarcely befitting so dignified an assembly, the Earl of Abingdon, a nobleman of very eccentric character, and restrained by no forms of parliamentary decorum, expressed his abhorrence of a coalition which had given birth to this political monster. He did not even hesitate to qualify Charles James Fox by name as "a mountebank Secretary of State, accustomed formerly to ascend the stages at Covent Garden and at Westminster Hall, from which he harangued the mob, but now calling himself the Minister of the people, though animated by the

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Johnson said, "Here is a man who has divided the kingdom with Cæsar, so that it was a doubt whether the nation should be ruled by the sceptre of George III. or the tongue of Fox."—ED.

criminal ambition of Cromwell and aiming at regal power." "The Secretary," exclaimed Lord Abingdon, "exceeds in violence, by his seizure of the East India Company's charter, the worst acts of those tyrants Charles II. and his brother James." With great pertinacity the Duke of Richmond pointed out the injustice of the measure; nor did the ties of consanguinity which connected him with Fox prevent him from severely arraigning the recent grant of a pension of £1000 a year given to Sir William Gordon, in order that by vacating his seat for Portsmouth he might enable Government to introduce Erskine into the House of Commons at this critical juncture. Unsolicited and unconnected with party, Lord Camden entered his strong protest against such an infraction of all law on the part of Administration by bringing forward an Act, not, as it professed to be, of regulation, but of rapacious confiscation.

Ministers, thus powerfully assailed, if they exhibited the talents, by no means displayed the energies, exerted by their opponents. Lord Loughborough, on whom devolved the principal weight of defending the Government, found himself ill supported in that attempt. The Speaker, Lord Mansfield, voted indeed with Administration on the question of adjournment, but remained altogether silent, and extended no active assistance. Conscious that his colleagues had lost the confidence of the King, the Duke of Portland alluded with warmth, in the course of debate, to Lord Temple's recent audience of the sovereign, which he denounced as a violation of the constitution. But that nobleman avowing the fact, and justifying it as the privilege of an hereditary counsellor of the crown to offer advice, called on the Duke to bring forward against him a specific charge. Lord

Shelburne, though he once, I believe, attended in his place, took no part whatever in the discussions, nor ever voted on the question, either in person or by proxy—a line of conduct which, when we consider that he had been expelled from power by the Coalition only a few months earlier, opened a wide field for political speculation on the motives of his silence or secession.

It will be readily admitted that, if we try the conduct of George III. in personally interposing to influence the debates and to render himself master of the deliberations of the Upper House by the spirit of our constitution, as fixed since the expulsion of James II., it appears at first sight subversive of every principle of political freedom. Such an ill-timed and imprudent interference had in fact laid the foundation of all the misfortunes of Charles I. But the same line of conduct which in 1641 excited general indignation, in 1783 awakened no sentiment of national condemnation. On the contrary, the King's position being perfectly understood, the impossibility of his extrication from the Ministerial toils wound about him appeared so clearly demonstrated, unless by a decided personal effort to arrest the bill in its progress through the House of Lords, that the country at large affixed its sanction to the act. There were, nevertheless, it must be admitted, many individuals who thought that the royal disapprobation should have been earlier signified, and who inclined to accuse the King of something like duplicity or deception in his treatment of Administration. We must, however, candidly allow that he was not bound to observe any measures of scrupulous delicacy with men who had entered his Cabinet by violence, who held him in bondage, and who meditated to render that bondage perpetual. Nor

was it easy for him to discover and to detect by the force of his own intellect, without legal assistance, the invasions on his independence and prerogative contained in the provisions of the bill as originally submitted to him, till they were exposed and made manifest by the discussions that took place in the House of Commons. The rapidity with which it was carried up to the peers, and the little delay which Fox evidently meant it should there undergo before it was presented for his concurrence, left him no option in his line of conduct, and very little time for action. These reasons exculpated and justified an interference apparently so irreconcilable with the genius of the British constitution. A fact not generally known, but not the less true, is, that his Majesty was advised, and had taken the resolution, if the bill had actually passed the House of Lords, to have nevertheless refused to give it the royal assent. He would then have instantly changed his Ministers, dissolved the Parliament, and thrown himself for protection upon his people. Those persons who have had the best opportunities of knowing his character and appreciating his firmness under the most alarming or distressful circumstances while sustained by the conviction of acting right, will not doubt or disbelieve the fact. Nor would the nation probably have condemned his conduct or have delivered him up again into the hands of the Coalition. Happily, however, the middle line which he adopted prevented the necessity of recurring to such painful extremities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "That lively and humorous old man" (the father of Lord John Townshend) "said he had always foreseen the Coalition Ministry would not last, for he was at court when Mr. Fox kissed hands, and he observed George III. turn back his ears and eyes, just like the horse at Astley's when the tailor he had determined to throw was getting on him."—Russell's *Memorials of Fox*, vol. ii. p. 28. Sheridan

[17th December 1783.] Though Fox's bill was thus rejected by the Upper House, he still remained, together with Lord North, in possession of their respective offices, no change whatever in Administration having yet taken place. Fox even delivered, as Secretary of State, from the Treasury bench, the most bitter and animated philippic ever pronounced within the walls of the House of Commons, in the course of which he dealt out every accusation against the sovereign and those members of the House of peers, the Pretorian bands, or rather the Janizaries, as he denominated them, who had strangled the measure by their Sultan's order. Nor did he hesitate to compare the paper intrusted by his Majesty to Lord Temple, which had operated such injurious effects to the Administration, with the rescript of Tiberius sent to the Roman Senate from Capræa for the condemnation of Sejanus, unheard in his defence, and without adducing proofs of his guilt. In classic language, and in the words of Juvenal, he reprobated such an interference as wholly destructive of the British constitution.

The whole of this debate formed one of the most curious and singular scenes ever witnessed, the Ministers being virtually out of office, though still occupying their official seats, while Pitt and his friends, though nominally in opposition, in fact possessed the royal confidence. Fox anticipated indeed with certainty the total rejection of his bill in the Upper House; but as the peers sat late before the division took place, the event was not known at the hour when the Secretary made his memorable philippic. The proceedings in the Commons were opened with a sort of mock solemnity calculated to

aided heartily in bringing about the Coalition, but when it was overthrown, went about vapouringly declaring that he had always foreseen it could not last.—D.

give them a degree of dramatic effect, the mace being sent round, on a request made to the Speaker for the purpose, to summon the attendance of all members found in the adjacent rooms. This extraordinary mandate from the chair, so unusual, was designed to spread alarm, as if the privileges of the House were invaded by the unconstitutional influence or interference of the crown. Precedents were found for the vote proposed to be adopted in the year 1640, when the conduct of Charles I. was said to exhibit a striking conformity with the act of George III., in thus personally exerting himself through various noble individuals to throw out the East India Bill. The elements of the business being arranged and prepared, a second motion was made from the Ministerial side of the House, reprobating, as "subversive of the constitution, the attempt to report any opinion of his Majesty upon a depending bill with a view to influence members." Its object being to designate and to criminate Lord Temple, who had exerted himself more than any other peer in circulating the royal wishes, the proposition was strongly opposed by Mr. William Grenville, that nobleman's youngest brother. He called on the accuser to stand forth and to make good the charge.

Pitt, after treating with derision the preparatory formalities which introduced the resolution then submitted to the House, demanded on what ground the assertion itself reposed, except upon vague surmise or common rumour? Fox now came forward for the last time in his Ministerial capacity, and in a speech of unreasonable length, but of prodigious energy, accompanied with more than ordinary asperity of language, he endeavoured to rally his disheartened troops, among whom many already began to perceive that they had committed themselves on erroneous suppositions beyond their intentions. We

may indeed safely assume that only a small proportion of the 558 members who then composed the Lower House possessed ability, industry, and leisure sufficient, in addition to local knowledge, for enabling them to weigh in their own scales the East India Bill—a measure of so complex and comprehensive a nature in itself, and at that time not at all generally understood throughout the kingdom. Fox's followers, it is true, were for the most part zealously and personally attached to him as their sole leader, round whom they rallied, in or out of power. But Lord North counted many adherents, who, in supporting his measures, believed that they were maintaining the Government, and looked more to the Minister than to the man. Various individuals in Parliament held offices in the royal household or about the court, among which description of members a great defection must naturally be expected. Such was the state of that assembly on the night of the 17th of December, one of the most extraordinary to be found in our history.

“The deliberations of this evening,” observed Fox when he rose, “must decide whether we are to be henceforward freemen or slaves; whether this House is the palladium of liberty or the engine of despotism; whether we are prospectively to exercise any functions of our own, or to become the mere echo of secret influence. I trust Englishmen will be as jealous of that influence as superior to open violence. The bill, though matured by all the abilities of this House, and though supported by nearly two to one on every division during its progress, will in all probability be lost elsewhere. By whom? By an independent majority? No! By the votes of the Lords of the Bed-chamber.” After exhausting his resentment on those noble persons, who had, as he asserted, “forfeited by their conduct every claim to

the character of gentlemen, and degraded the characteristic independence of the peerage as well as vilified the British Legislature in the eyes of all Europe," the Secretary diverged to other topics of declamation. "On what foundation," demanded he, "do the Ministers stand who come into office by means of secret influence? Have they not a halter about their necks? They hold their employments, not at the option of the sovereign, but of the very reptiles who burrow under the throne. What man would stoop to such humiliation? Boys without judgment, experience, or knowledge of the world may thus precipitately follow the headlong course of ambition, and vault into the seat while the reins are committed to other hands; but the Minister who can submit to such degradation and the country which tolerates it must be mutual curses to each other."

Having thus depicted Pitt's position, Fox turned round upon Jenkinson. "During the interregnum of the last spring," observed he, "I never had a doubt with whom that disgraceful suspension of government originated. In like manner, no sooner were pretended grounds of objection stated to the East India Bill than I instantly looked to the same quarter. The same dark and mysterious cabal which then invested the throne, misleading the royal mind with unworthy arts, has been once more employed to perform a similar part. But will this enlightened country revert to those ages when princes were tyrants, ministers were minions, and government only intrigue? For God's sake, in every case strangle us not, in the very moment when we look for success, by an infamous band of bed-chamber Janizaries! When the hour arrives—and it may not be very distant—which shall dismiss me from the public service, I will not imitate the example set me by the late Chancellor of the Exchequer of lingering



in office after the national voice calls on me to be gone. I did not come in by the fiat of majesty, though by that fiat I am not reluctant to go out. I ever stood, and wish only to stand, on public ground. The people of England have made me what I am. It was by their partiality I have been called to a station in their service. Perhaps it would not be treating them well hastily or precipitately to abandon the post which they have confided to me." Fox concluded, nevertheless, this harangue—one of the most violent ever pronounced in my time within the walls of the House—by an encomium on the very sovereign whose service he was about to quit, and on whom he had thrown out so many severe reflections. "No man," said he, "venerates him more than I do for his personal and domestic virtues;" but he subjoined that "the present generation regarded his Majesty for the virtuous example which he exhibited, and posterity would long adore him for his progeny." Pepper Arden did not fail to remark that Fox's veneration for the sovereign arose principally from attachment to his posterity.

Vainly, nevertheless, Pitt urged him to retire, and thus to anticipate his dismissal from employment. Content with rendering the majority of the House subservient to his views by passing various resolutions calculated not only to stigmatise the late interference of the crown, but intended at the same time to prevent the interruption of their deliberations by any act of prerogative, all which motions he carried by a majority of more than two to one. The Coalition Ministers refused to give in their resignation. Under these circumstances, which called for decision the King displayed no irresolution. Conscious that he had advanced too far to recede either with honour or with benefit, he passed the whole of the 18th of December in making dispositions for the formation

of a new Cabinet. Finding, nevertheless, at a late hour of the evening, that the two Secretaries of State still declined to resign, he signified to them, by a messenger, that he had no further occasion for their services. They received at the same time information that a personal interview would be disagreeable to him, and were ordered to deliver up the seals of their respective departments through the medium of the two Under-Secretaries, Fraser and Nepean. Fox immediately complied; but Lord North having deposited the seal of his office in the hands of his son, Colonel North, one of his Under-Secretaries, who could nowhere be found for a considerable time, the King waited patiently at St. James's till it should be brought to him. Mr. Pollock, first clerk in Lord North's office, who had already retired to rest, being called out of his bed in consequence of the requisition from his Majesty, went in search of Colonel North. After a long delay he was found, and produced the seal, which being brought to the King about one o'clock in the morning, he delivered it into Lord Temple's hands, and then returned to the Queen's house.

[19th December 1783.] On the ensuing day, it being indispensable to form a Government with the least possible delay, Mr. Pitt, notwithstanding his youth, was placed at the head of the new Cabinet as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, an instance without precedent in our annals, and which will probably never be again realised. Lord Bolingbroke, then Mr. St. John, had indeed under Queen Anne been made Secretary at War as early in life, and we have since seen Lord Henry Petty, now Marquis of Lansdown, at about the same age raised to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer in 1806, after Mr. Pitt's decease. But there is a wide interval from either of the above examples to

the elevation before us. If we reflect likewise on the decided majority against which Pitt had to contend in the House of Commons, conducted by such energies and talents as Fox possessed, we may be tempted on first consideration to accuse him of imprudence and temerity. The event, nevertheless, proved that, in accepting employment under all the disadvantages here enumerated, he had maturely weighed the peril and the consequences. Other impediments not less serious presented themselves in the interior of the Cabinet recently formed, where Lord Temple insisted on the immediate dissolution of Parliament as a step necessary to their Ministerial preservation, if not even to their personal safety. But Pitt, with consummate judgment, while he retained in his own hands so powerful an engine, which he held suspended over the House of Commons, abstained from using it till the progress of affairs should justify the interposition. Conscious that no act of the royal prerogative could be more generally repugnant to the inclinations of the members composing the Lower House than a dissolution before they had sat half the period for which they had been elected, he resisted Lord Temple's proposition. That nobleman in consequence immediately resigned only three days after his appointment, thus involving the half-formed Administration in confusion and embarrassment, not wholly exempt even from some degree of ridicule and of danger. Never did any Ministry commence its career under a more inauspicious and apparently desperate predicament, which was destined so long to retain possession of the reins of power.

Pepper Arden having moved Pitt's writ for the borough of Appleby, Dundas, acting as his delegate, while he could not be personally present in the House, endeavoured to induce that assembly to

meet on the subsequent day (Saturday, the 20th of December) in order to expedite the passage of the land-tax. But Fox, now out of office, affecting to suppose that an immediate dissolution of Parliament impended, peremptorily refused his consent to the proposition. He observed that, "though he did not deny the right of the crown to dissolve, yet no person would venture to say such a prerogative ought to be exercised merely to suit the convenience of an ambitious young man." Lord Mulgrave, who not long afterwards became joint Paymaster of the Forces under the new Ministry, supported Dundas, and in the course of his speech expressed great pleasure that "a faction which had too long maintained possession of power was at length driven from place." Lord North and Fox, being seated close to each other on the Opposition bench, sustained by a very numerous attendance of their friends, constituting an undisputed majority of the members present, a loud and general laugh arose among them at the word faction. "I am glad," resumed Lord Mulgrave, "to find that gentlemen are so merry upon their misfortune. I still, however, rejoice that their power is extinct. Not that I mean to say," looking at Lord North, "I am glad to see my noble friend in the blue ribband out of employment. I respect his character. I too well know his integrity and abilities not to wish that he were in office, but I lament to behold him in such bad company." Kenyon likewise spoke on the same side, with his characteristic disregard of all personal objects or interests, though he was made Attorney-General only a few days afterwards, for the second time. "I am neither in the secrets of those persons who are just dismissed," said he, "nor of their successors, and therefore I cannot know whether Parliament will or will not be dissolved. If a dissolution should

take place, I am ignorant whether I may have a seat in the next House of Commons. Nor indeed do I wish it. But be that as it may, I will support the proposition of Mr. Dundas, because the most fatal consequences to public credit must ensue if the land-tax does not speedily pass." Lord North answered both Kenyon and Lord Mulgrave with his accustomed suavity, wit, and powers of argument, but Fox, holding fast to the supremacy which he possessed over the House, refused to permit the assembly to meet on the following day. Nor did Dundas venture on a division, well knowing how decided a superiority of numbers the Coalition could command within those walls. An adjournment then took place.

[*20th and 21st December 1783.*] Meanwhile the sovereign proceeded to constitute a new Administration, but even after Lord Temple's resignation, when the Cabinet was at length completed, Pitt might be said to constitute its whole strength in one House, as Lord Thurlow equally sustained the weight of Government in the other assembly. The great seal was intrusted to the latter for the fourth time under the reign of George III. Lord Gower, made President of the Council, and the Duke of Rutland, who was appointed Privy Seal, brought, indeed, collectively a considerable accession of parliamentary interest and connections, but could boast only a very scanty addition of eloquence or of talents. The new Secretaries of State, Lord Sydney<sup>1</sup> and the Marquis of Carmarthen,<sup>2</sup> even if their abili-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Townshend was created Baron Sydney in March 1783, and raised to the title of Viscount six years later. He died in 1800, being then sixty-seven years of age.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Godolphin, Marquis of Carmarthen, summoned to the House of Lords as Baron Osborne in the lifetime of his father, on whose death in 1789 he succeeded as fifth Duke of Leeds. He died 31st January 1799.—ED.

ties had been of the most brilliant description—an assertion which assuredly could not be made consistently with truth—yet were both members of the House of Peers, a disadvantage only to be surmounted by Pitt's taking on himself the whole weight of business in the House of Commons, and thus uniting in some measure in his own person the defence of every department. Lord Howe, restored to the head of the Admiralty, was re-admitted into the Cabinet, and the Duke of Richmond returned to the Ordnance, but no mention was ever made of Lord Shelburne for any place in the Administration. He seemed to be completely extinct in the public recollection.

Sir George Howard<sup>1</sup> obtained the command of the forces, but neither he nor the Duke of Richmond was taken into the Cabinet. The new Commander-in-chief, a man of stature and proportions far exceeding the ordinary size, who had long been decorated with the Order of the Bath, was an accomplished courtier and a gallant soldier. Like Sir John Irwine, he owed his military elevation and employments more perhaps to royal favour than to any distinguished talents or professional services. He was one of the representatives for the town of Stamford. His legitimate descent from or alliance by consanguinity with the Dukes of Norfolk, notwithstanding the apparent evidence of his name, was, I believe, not established on incontestable grounds. He attained, as did General Conway not many years afterwards, to the rank of Field-Marshal, a dignity of which the British service had antecedently furnished only a few examples.<sup>2</sup> For the embassy to Paris, the Duke of Dorset was

<sup>1</sup> Sir George Howard seldom spoke in the House, but when he did, he was supposed to deliver the King's individual opinions.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> This title was first conferred upon John, Duke of Argyll, and George, Earl of Orkney, by George II. in 1736.—ED.

selected by Pitt, or rather by the King. As he honoured me with his friendship down to the close of his life, or till he *survived himself*, it may be naturally expected that I should say a few words respecting him. He was the son of Lord John Sackville, elder brother of Lord George, and succeeded collaterally to the title on the demise of his uncle Charles, second Duke of Dorset, mentioned so frequently in "Dodington's Diary" as Earl of Middlesex. The Duke, when named Ambassador to Versailles, had nearly attained his fortieth year. His person, if not handsome, was highly agreeable, and formed with great symmetry, his features pleasing, the expression of his countenance noble and interesting, his manners soft, quiet, ingratiating, and formed for a court, destitute of all affectation, but not deficient in dignity. He displayed, indeed, neither shining parts nor superior abilities. Yet, as he possessed good sense, matured by knowledge of the world, had travelled over a considerable part of Europe, and had improved his understanding by an extensive acquaintance with mankind, he was well calculated for such a mission.

The Duke had passed much time in Italy, where he imbibed a strong passion for all the fine arts, and a predilection for men of talents and artists, a taste which he indulged even beyond the limits of his fortune, and in the gratification of which he seemed to emulate his celebrated ancestor, Charles, Earl of Dorset. But the mediocrity of his estate when contrasted with his high rank imposed limits on the liberality of his disposition. Considered as Ambassador to France, though he could not sustain a comparison for diplomatic ability or strength of intellect with the Earl of Stair or with the first Horace Walpole, brother of Sir Robert, who had represented the English sovereign at the courts of

Louis XIV. and XV., he might at least be regarded as equal in talents to any of the noble individuals who had filled that office during the last years of George II. or under the reign of George III., if we except, as we must do, Lord Stormont. He had been from early youth a devotee to pleasure. The celebrated Nancy Parsons, afterwards Viscountess Maynard,<sup>1</sup> immortalised in Junius's Letters to the Duke of Grafton, was one of his mistresses. She made way for the Countess of Derby, who in her turn was eclipsed by the Baccelli, one of the most attractive dancers of our time. To Marie Antoinette, the French Queen, the Duke of Dorset rendered himself highly acceptable, possessed her esteem, and enjoyed her personal favour, circumstances by no means unessential to a man placed in his public situation, as that princess performed a very different part in the cabinet and councils of Louis XVI. from the humble subservience of the two Queens her immediate predecessors. Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip IV., King of Spain, who espoused Louis XIV., and Maria Leczinska, consort of his successor, possessed throughout their whole lives no shadow of political power or interest. Marie Antoinette's protection, aided by his connection with the Polignacs, had sufficed to procure for the Count d'Adhemar, at the conclusion of peace, the embassy to the Court of England, but he was far inferior in every accomplishment of mind and of manners to the Duke of Dorset.

Pepper Arden became Solicitor-General. Nature has seldom cast a human being in a less elegant or pleasing mould.<sup>2</sup> Even Dunning's person would

<sup>1</sup> Lord Maynard, the second Viscount, married "Mrs. Anne Horton," in 1776. He died childless in 1824, when he was succeeded by his nephew.—D.

<sup>2</sup> This was scarcely correct, although his nose was disfigured by an accident when he was a child. Mr. Cowper, solicitor to the Customs,



have gained by a comparison with Arden's figure and countenance. Nor were his legal talents more conspicuous in the general estimation of the bar. But his early acquaintance with Pitt, which time had matured into friendship, covered or concealed every jurisprudential deficiency.<sup>1</sup> That powerful protection, in defiance of Lord Thurlow's avowed dislike, or rather antipathy, conducted the new Solicitor-General rapidly to the honours and dignities of the law, finally placing him, where almost all those individuals patronised by the Minister found their ultimate repose, in the House of Peers. He possessed, however, no mean talents for debate, and displayed not only ardour but ability in the defence of his friends. When Fox, at this very time, proposed that a resolution should be adopted declaring any Minister criminal who should advise his Majesty to dissolve the Parliament, Arden instantly stood up to reprobate such doctrine. "What impediment," exclaimed he, "can be opposed to the just prerogative of the crown?—a resolution of this House? He must be indeed a timid Minister, unfit to govern this great country, who can be deterred from advising a dissolution by any terror of such a nature. Is this House of Commons to judge upon a question of their own continuance or annihilation? That measure is not to be tried before such judges. It will be determined by another House within these walls, and they may possibly applaud instead of censuring or condemning the resolution. I admit that it is no light matter to advise such a step, but the indi-

said that little Arden had come to visit him and his brother, all children, during the fair at Stockport; that returning home they all began running, and Cowper tripping up Arden, he fell, and a tin trumpet he had purchased ran into his nose, which occasioned the deformity.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> When Lord Alvanley was given over, he desired to be raised up in his bed, that he might devote the last moments of his life in writing to Mr. Pitt to thank him for his long-tryed and constant friendship.—ED.

viduals who are to be annihilated by its operation are of all others the least proper to decide respecting it." Fox replied that "he must be a bold Minister indeed who should dare to despise the voice of the people." But Arden rose a second time, and while he admitted that the people merited every attention when their opinion was solemnly or clearly pronounced, maintained and distinctly repeated his original declaration. It must likewise be allowed that no man in Parliament had given a more pertinacious and unremitting opposition to Fox's East India Bill than Arden. The last blow aimed at it before it passed the Lower House came from his lips; for I recollect that after that obnoxious measure had been carried, on the third reading, by a majority of more than two to one, the Solicitor-General, Mansfield, having risen to move for leave to bring up a clause declaring it to be a *public bill*, Arden exclaimed that "he had no objection; but that he was not surprised at its having escaped his learned friend's memory, as every other person considered the bill to be a *private job*." With that stigma impressed on the measure, Fox, regardless of the sarcasm, bore it in triumph to the bar of the Lords.

The King's table, covered with badges of office, seals, wands, and gold sticks, profusely given in by the adherents of the dismissed Ministers, presented an extraordinary spectacle. Among the foremost to testify his Ministerial fidelity, the Honourable Charles Greville, next brother to the Earl of Warwick, resigned his office of Treasurer of the Household. Possessing, like his uncle, Sir William Hamilton,<sup>1</sup> an elegant mind, and a taste for many branches of the fine arts, which pursuit had carried him into

<sup>1</sup> Sir William is said to have paid his nephew's debts on condition that he surrendered the lady who lived under his protection, and whom Sir William afterwards married,—the erring yet ill-used Emma, Lady Hamilton.—D.

expenses beyond the bounds of severe prudence, his resignation of such an employment could not therefore be to him in any sense a matter of indifference. I have heard Mr. Greville, whom I very particularly knew, often say that the King most kindly expostulated with him when he entered the closet to lay down his place, and urged him by no means to commit an act so unnecessary; the Treasurership of the Household being not a Ministerial, but a personal situation in the family of the sovereign. I ought likewise to add that Fox, who well knew Mr. Greville's private embarrassments, had, with a liberality of mind truly noble, exhorted him to retain his post, absolving him at the same time from all considerations of a political kind. But his feelings of honour were too delicate to permit of his following either the suggestions of convenience, the exhortations of Fox, or the expostulations of his sovereign. He retired during several years from court and from public life into comparative obscurity.<sup>1</sup>

Lord Hinchinbrook, less scrupulous, and perhaps with better sense, instead of quitting his office of Master of the Buckhounds, though his father, the Earl of Sandwich, followed the fortunes of the Coalition, wisely abandoned that obnoxious party, and declined to give in his resignation. Sir George Yonge went back to his office of Secretary at War, which he had held under Lord Shelburne's Administration—a post that seemed to be hereditary in his family, his father, Sir William Yonge, having occupied it with much distinction under the reign of George II. Sir William, who performed no inconsiderable part in the political annals of that period, was equally distinguished likewise in another line, among the men of wit, pleasure, and gallantry. Lady Vane makes honourable mention of him in those memoirs

<sup>1</sup> He died at a house on Paddington Green.—ED.

of her life which Smollett has inserted in the third volume of his "Peregrine Pickle," and his poetical reply to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's poetical declaration of her passion for him has all the classic wit as well as sarcasm of his contemporary Sir Charles Hanbury Williams's best compositions. I have heard Lord Sackville say, who remembered Sir William Yonge, that when Secretary at War, having waited officially on John, Duke of Argyle, then Commander-in-chief of the Forces, in order to make his report on a matter of business, the Duke kept him standing while he himself remained seated for a considerable time.<sup>1</sup> Their Ministerial conference being ended, he immediately requested Sir William to take a chair. "No, sir," replied he; "if the Secretary at War is not worthy to sit down in the presence of the Commander-in-chief, it would be altogether unbecoming Sir William Yonge to be seated in company with the Duke of Argyle." So saying, he quitted the room. Sir George Yonge, with whom I was much acquainted, did not want talents, and he maintained his place in a debate, though he possessed no pretension to eloquence, but in parliamentary capacity I always considered him as very inferior to his father.

[22d—24th December 1783.] Meanwhile Fox, who remained completely master of the House of Commons, where Mr. Pitt could not even appear during the time necessary for his re-election, might be said to sway with absolute power the deliberations of that assembly. His first cares were directed to prevent either a prorogation or a dissolution of Parliament, by adopting resolutions calculated to render each of these proceedings difficult and dan-

<sup>1</sup> This is curious in the light of the present practice, when the Secretary of State for War, who has taken the place of the Secretary at War, is the official superior of the Commander-in-chief.—ED.

gerous to Ministers. Having consented to pass the land-tax bill, for which act of compliance with public necessity he assumed no ordinary merit as a proof of his superiority to all interested or factious views, he made a full display of his omnipotence within those walls. Nor could all the assurances given by Dundas from the Treasury bench, though confirmed by Mr. Bankes,<sup>1</sup> the friend and representative of the new First Minister, declaring by his express authority that he would neither advise such an act of prerogative nor would continue in office if the crown had recourse to it, prevail on Fox to allow of an adjournment for the Christmas recess till he had voted without experiencing any impediment an address to the throne of the most criminating nature, which was ordered to be presented by the whole House. Affecting to consider Pitt as a mere creature of secret influence, the child of the back-stairs, Fox treated Bankes's reiterated protestations in the name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer with the most insulting and contemptuous levity or disregard. "As far as that gentleman's private character is concerned," said Fox, "I would readily take his word; but, to speak plainly, if I was myself in the situation which he now fills, knowing as much as I do of the power of secret influence, I would not ask any man to take my word, because at the very moment when I might be engaged in declaring that Parliament would not be dissolved, that very measure might be determined on in consequence of secret advice. It is the duty of the House to banish that pernicious and baneful agent, secret influence, for ever from about the throne." Bankes still pressing the point, and repeating that "if any idea of proroguing or dissolving Parliament should be entertained

<sup>1</sup> Henry Bankes of Corfe Castle was an early friend of Pitt's. The two were associated at Cambridge.—ED.

anywhere, Mr. Pitt would instantly resign," Fox replied, "I have no doubt that he might act spiritedly on the occasion, but what compensation could his resignation produce to the public for the evils which must result from a dissolution? There is not a moment to be lost; and I hope that if any adjournment at all takes place, it will only be for a few days."

On receiving the King's answer, which, though gracious and conciliating in its expressions, did not breathe the less determination, after passing upon it the most severe comments as a mixture of duplicity and ambiguity, Fox then permitted of an adjournment for the short period of sixteen days, an interval indispensably requisite to complete the Ministerial arrangements. The resignation or dismissal of the new Administration was, however, confidently anticipated by the party, and announced by Fox himself in one of his speeches—I think on the 24th of December—when he ventured to predict that its duration could not possibly exceed a few weeks. "The state of this country," exclaimed he, "will not admit of a long recess, for, as the present Ministers cannot stand long, and, indeed, to talk of the permanency of such an Administration would only be laughing at and insulting them, it will become necessary to move for another set of writs after the holidays in room of those gentlemen who must vacate their seats on the formation of a new Government. In order, therefore, to prevent the calamities that menace the constitution, I would propose the shortest recess possible. It may be urged that, knowing as I do the Ministry cannot last, I manifest an impatience to be restored to office. I do not know that I shall form one of the next Administration, but I confess I am impatient that the sense of the House may be speedily taken

on the present Ministers." So confident was he, indeed, or at least he pretended to be, of Pitt's inevitable dismissal, that he mentioned in a subsequent part of his speech the youth of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the weakness incident to his early period of life as the only possible excuse for his temerity in accepting office. How far Fox thoroughly believed his own predictions of his rival's imminent fall may perhaps be questioned, but the most experienced members among them, with Welbore Ellis at their head, joined ostensibly in this opinion, which, it must be confessed, was built upon all the precedents known since the elevation of the House of Hanover to the throne.

Lord North, who had been absent, from the effect of indisposition, during a great part of the debates while the East India Bill was in its progress through the House of Commons, made ample compensation for his short and involuntary retreat by his presence and exertions after the dismissal of Ministers. During the number of years that I sat with him in Parliament, I never witnessed a more brilliant exhibition of his intellectual powers than on the 22d of December, when Erskine moved for an address to the throne deprecating a dissolution. Indeed, from the instant he rose till he concluded, almost every sentence teemed with the keenest wit or with the most severe yet delicate satire. In the commencement of his speech, Lord North justified by cogent arguments his union with Fox, as having been dictated by state necessity and public utility, eulogising in animated language the virtues no less than the abilities of his late colleague, whom he wished in future always to be designated as his "right honourable friend." "Our political connection," continued he, "was founded on principles of mutual honour. The great points of policy on

which we had differed being no more, we thought that without inconsistency we might cordially act together. The experiment has succeeded. No little jealousies have disturbed our union. All has been good faith on one part and confidence on the other. No unworthy concessions were made by either side. I appeal to my right honourable friend if ever I renounced or sacrificed any opinion resting on principle, unless when the propriety of such renunciation became apparent from reason and argument. On the other hand, I must declare in justice to him that he never abandoned any principle which he maintained when in opposition to my Government." "We are charged with having seized on the reins of power. This, I confess, is a charge which I do not understand, for the country waited full six weeks without having any Administration. Every effort was vainly exerted to form a Cabinet, and when all means failed the Ministers quitted their offices. The Cabinet remained empty ; so that if we seized on it we could only have done so by marching in after the garrison had fled, who, while evacuating the fortress, exclaimed, 'What a cursed Coalition is this, which expels us from our situations!' If, however, we did get possession of power, we at least carried it by storm, bravely in the face of the enemy, not by sap. We made our advances above-ground, in view of the foe ; not by mining in the dark, and blowing up the fort before the garrison knew that any attack was meditated."

The ingenuity, pleasantry, and force of this eloquent defence can hardly be exceeded. Then, after severely arraigning the mode of Pitt's admission into the Cabinet, which he stigmatised as surreptitious and unconstitutional, he diverged with inconceivable humour into the path of ridicule, so analogous to his formation of mind. Alluding to the wish ex-



pressed more than once by Martin (borrowed from Hotspur's invocation in Shakespeare), that a starling should be perched on the Speaker's chair, who might incessantly repeat the words, "Cursed Coalition!" he observed that so long as an honourable member of that House "continued to pronounce those sounds as if by rote, and without any fixed idea, let what would be the subject of debate, he conceived the starling to be unnecessary, inasmuch as the gentleman would make just as great an impression as the bird on his hearers." Having convulsed the House with laughter by this severe but ludicrous remark, he compared, or rather he contrasted, the conduct of the two men who were shut up in the Eddystone Lighthouse during six weeks,<sup>1</sup> with the opposite line of action embraced by Fox and himself. "Those men," said he, "from reciprocal enmity, preferred letting the fire go out and beholding the navy of England dashed to pieces, rather than lend each other any assistance. But we, animated by other and more enlarged sentiments, considered the preservation of the vessel of state our primary duty, and we agreed that at all events the fire in the lighthouse should not be extinguished." An allusion so ingenious as well as felicitous almost electrified his audience; and if wit could have supported or restored the Coalition, it must, when falling from his lips, have overborne every impediment. But the moral impression made on the public mind to their disadvantage

<sup>1</sup> Smeaton's "Eddystone Lighthouse" (2d ed., 1793, p. 31) contains the following allusion to this anecdote:—"A boat landing there with visitants of curiosity, after examining the place and structure, they observed to one of the men how very comfortably they might live there in a state of retirement. 'Yes,' said the man, 'very comfortably, if we could have the use of our *tongues*, but it is now a full month since my partner and I have spoken to each other.'<sup>2</sup>" Smeaton adds a note to the effect, that as Lord North had alluded to the anecdote, he would say that this line of the public service was never to his knowledge intermitted or obstructed by this or any dissensions among the parties themselves.—ED.

daily acquiring strength, finally completed their downfall, though the catastrophe was protracted during more than three months by various circumstances.

[26th—31st December 1783.] If the struggle for power had lain only between Pitt and Fox, the former of whom, whatever might be the extent of his talents, was unable to command a majority upon any question that arose in the House, while the latter carried every motion, the contest would, no doubt, have been soon decided. Or had the dispute been, as under Charles I., between the sovereign (claiming to exercise prerogatives antiquated and oppressive) on the one hand, and the representative body on the other, propelled and sustained by the people, as their organs and protectors against arbitrary violence, the termination might have been foreseen without much penetration. But Fox, though he was become by his union with Lord North master of the deliberations of the Lower House, had sacrificed to that very union in a considerable degree the good opinion of the country, and the remains of his former popularity which survived his coalition with Lord North had since been shipwrecked in the India Bill. He had therefore imprudently, though, as it would nevertheless seem, reflectively, engaged in a conflict where the crown and the nation both combined against him. Without the aid of the people the sovereign would indeed have been powerless. As little could the House of Peers, unsupported by the public voice, have checked his career. It was their union which became irresistible. Fox, who, whatever his admirers may assert, possessed more genius, eloquence, and talent than prudence or judgment, does not appear to have deeply weighed and appreciated these facts before he entered the lists. Unfortunately for him, too, the champion wanted by the crown, and who seemed to be expressly made for

the conjuncture, presented himself in Pitt. His name, rendered illustrious by his father's public services; the decorum of his manners, so opposed to those of Fox; even his very youth, which should have operated against him, appeared to recommend him to national favour. The King availed himself of these aids to overwhelm the Coalition under the ruins of the fortress which they had so nearly constructed, and fondly deemed inassailable. Only time was still wanting in order to enlighten, to awaken, and to animate the people at large, who, not being as yet fully informed upon all the points of Fox's bill, required to be roused into exertion before the last address should be made to them as electors.

I well remember, not more than a fortnight subsequent to the period of which I am now speaking, Governor Johnstone, rising in his place—I believe it happened on the first day of their meeting after the recess, the 12th of January—insisted with great force of reasoning on this point. I knew Johnstone well, consulted, and indeed acted in some degree of concert with him throughout the whole progress of the East India Bill. He was not less attached to Lord North than myself; but that amiable nobleman, as well as most accomplished statesman, no longer held the reins. Surrendering all his own volitions, he seemed to adopt those of his more active as well as ambitious colleague, for assuredly Lord North, if he had not been associated with Fox and Burke, would never, from the suggestions of his own judgment, or inclination, or opinion, have originated so strong and unconstitutional a measure. He was carried along by the torrent, and finally swept away in its course. Johnstone, addressing the House of Commons, expatiated on the rapacity and other features of Fox's bill. "It becomes," said he, "more detested from day to day by the wisest and most impartial

men throughout the nation, as the confiscating principle on which it is founded, and the artifice with which it has been carried on so far towards its completion, are more known and understood by all ranks. The rejection of so dangerous an experiment on the British constitution is regarded by every thinking individual as one of the greatest triumphs over inordinate ambition recorded in our annals. I do not assert that these sentiments have as yet pervaded the lower orders of society. The dangers arising from political or legislative institutions, when veiled by the arts and eloquence of superior statesmen or of accomplished orators, are not immediately obvious to the wisest capacity, and make their way slowly to vulgar comprehension. Thank God they are obviated for the present moment! But whether there exist sense and virtue sufficient in the country to protect us from the machinations still carried on against the public freedom, forms the great cause of that struggle on which we are assembled to decide within these walls."

Pitt, with a judgment beyond his years, instead of prematurely dissolving the House of Commons, as a man of meaner talents or of less resource would have done, undertook the experiment of endeavouring first to conciliate or to convince the majority, thus allowing the popular sentiment full leisure to expand, and finally to overpower all resistance, while he reserved for the proper moment, whenever it should be thoroughly matured, his final appeal to the country by a dissolution. Such was the real state of affairs in the last days of December 1783, at the time when Pitt, contrary to all precedent, and under apparent difficulties the most insurmountable, ventured to accept the reins of Government.

It forms an object of the most natural and rational curiosity minutely to survey him at this critical

period of his life. He was not then much more than twenty-four years and a half old, and consequently had not attained the age at which many individuals, under the testamentary dispositions of their parents, are still legally considered to be in a state of tutelage or minority. In the formation of his person he was tall and slender, but without elegance or grace. His countenance, taken as a whole, did not display either the fine expression of character or the intellect of Fox's face, on every feature of which his mind was more or less forcibly depicted. It was not till Pitt's eye lent animation to his other features, which were in themselves tame, that they lighted up and became strongly intelligent. Fox, even when quiescent, could not be mistaken for an ordinary man. In his manners, Pitt, if not repulsive, was cold, stiff, and without suavity or amenity. He seemed never to invite approach or to encourage acquaintance, though when addressed, he could be polite, communicative, and occasionally gracious. Smiles were not natural to him, even when seated on the Treasury bench, where, placed at the summit of power, young, surrounded by followers, admirers, and flatterers, he maintained a more sullen gravity than his antagonist exhibited, who beheld around him only the companions of his political exile, poverty, and privations. From the instant that Pitt entered the doorway of the House of Commons, he advanced up the floor with a quick and firm step, his head erect and thrown back, looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor favouring with a nod or a glance any of the individuals seated on either side, among whom many who possessed five thousand pounds a year would have been gratified even by so slight a mark of attention. It was not thus that Lord North or Fox treated Parliament, nor from them would Parliament have so

patiently endured it ; but Pitt seemed made to guide and to command, even more than to persuade or to convince, the assembly that he addressed.

In the flower of youth, when he was placed at the head of Administration, he manifested none of the characteristic virtues or defects usually accompanying that period of life. Charles XII., King of Sweden, could not have exhibited more coldness, indifference, or apathy towards women ; a point of his character on which his enemies dwelt with malignant though impotent satisfaction, while his friends laboured with equal pertinacity to repel the imputation. To him the Opposition applied, as had been done to his father, the description given of a Roman youth—

“ Multa tulit, fecitque puer ; sudavit et alsit ;  
Abstinuit venere.”

In order to justify him from such a supposed blank in his formation, his adherents whispered that he was no more chaste than other men, though more decorous in his pleasures ; and they asserted that he made frequent visits to a female of distinguished charms who resided on the other side of Westminster Bridge ; but I never could learn from any of them her name or abode. Pitt's apparent insensibility towards the other sex and his chastity formed indeed one of the subjects on which the minority exhausted their wit, or rather their malevolence, as if it had been necessary that the First Minister of George III., should be, like the Chancellor of Charles II., “ the greatest libertine in his dominions.” I recollect soon after Pitt became confirmed in power, his detaining the House of Commons from the business of the day during a short time, while he went up to the House of Lords, and as Mrs. Siddons was to perform the part

of "Belvidera"<sup>1</sup> that evening, when Fox never failed if possible to attend, seated among the musicians in the orchestra at Drury Lane, the Opposition impatiently expected Pitt's return in order to propose an adjournment. As soon as the door opened and he made his appearance, one of them, a man of classic mind—it was Sheridan—exclaimed, "Jam redit et virgo!"

If, however, the Minister viewed women with indifference, he was no enemy to wine, nor to the social conviviality of the table. His constitution, in which a latent and hereditary gout early displayed itself, which disorder, heightened by political distress, domestic and foreign, carried him off at forty-seven, always demanded the aid and stimulus of the grape.<sup>2</sup> It was not, therefore, in him so much a gratification or an indulgence as a physical want, though he unquestionably yielded to its seductions without making any great effort at resistance; resembling in this respect a distinguished consular character of antiquity, relative to whose virtue Horace says—

"Narratur et prisci Catonis,  
Sæpe mero caluisse virtus."

Early in the autumn of 1784, he had indeed nearly fallen a victim to one of those festive meetings, at which no severe renunciations were enjoined by the host or practised by the guests. Returning, by way

<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Isabella, she repeated *Belvidera* oftener than any other character this year. It was the year in which she procured engagements at Drury Lane for two of her sisters, poor actresses and very jealous of "Sarah." In the same year, too, September 30th, John Kemble (from Dublin) made his first appearance at the same theatre as *Hamlet*.—D.

<sup>2</sup> The celebrated physician, Dr. Baillie, expressed the opinion that Pitt absolutely required a stimulus of some sort, from his unwearied and constant application to business, and that if he refrained from wine he must substitute laudanum. Before he rose to speak he was in the habit of going up to the coffee-room and drinking a bottle of port out of a tumbler.—ED.

of frolic, very late at night on horseback, to Wimbledon from Addiscombe, the seat of Mr. Jenkinson, near Croydon, where the party had dined, Lord Thurlow, who was then Chancellor, Pitt, and Dundas, found the turnpike gate situate between Tooting and Streatham thrown open. Being elevated above their usual prudence, and having no servant near them, they passed through the gate at a brisk pace, without stopping to pay the toll, regardless of the remonstrances or threats of the keeper of the turnpike, who, running after them, and believing them to belong to some highwaymen who had recently committed depredations on that road, discharged the contents of his blunderbuss at their backs. Happily he did no injury.<sup>1</sup> To this curious and narrow escape of the First Minister, which furnished matter of pleasantry, though perhaps not of rejoicing, to the Opposition, allusion is thus made in the "*Rolliad*"—

"How, as he wandered darkling o'er the plain,  
His reason drowned in Jenkinson's champagne,  
A rustic's hand, but righteous Fate withstood,  
Had shed a Premier's for a robber's blood."

Probably no men in high office since Charles II.'s time drank harder than Pitt's companions, as, in addition to the individuals already named, we should not omit the Duke of Rutland and Lord

<sup>1</sup> "He in another place represents Mr. Pitt as endeavouring to bilk a turnpike-keeper in a drunken frolic, and having been fired at while making his escape. But Mr. Pitt, even in his moments of convivial elevation, could not have been betrayed into such mean irregularities; the truth of the matter is, that Mr. Pitt's postilions having missed the road as he was one night returning from Croydon, alighted to ask the way, and Mr. Pitt having also got out of his carriage, they knocked at a house to obtain information and were answered by a shot, which the owner fired supposing them to be housebreakers. Sir Nathaniel quotes the *Rolliad* for his account of this adventure, but it is plain he does not understand what he quotes, as the *Rolliad* clearly points to the facts as we have stated them, and refers to 'the instance of Mr. Pitt's late peril from the farmer at Wandsworth.'"—*Quarterly Review*, vol. xiii. p. 211.—ED.



Gower, neither of whom professed or practised mortification. The Duke of Montrose, who entertained Pitt's Cabinet in 1784 and in 1804, used to say that "any one member of the former Cabinet drank more wine than the whole collective individuals did twenty years later." Once, and once only, the House of Commons witnessed a deviation from strict sobriety in the First Minister and the Treasurer of the Navy, who having come down after a repast, not of a Pythagorean description, found themselves unable to manage the debate or to reply to the arguments of the minority with their accustomed ability. I was present on the occasion. No illiberal notice or advantage was, however, taken of this solitary act of indiscretion.<sup>1</sup> The House adjourned the discussion, and it sank into oblivion. Fox never subjected himself, either in or out of office, to similar comments. He was always fresh, though the Treasury bench, under the Coalition Ministry, had not wanted some noble advocates of the house of Howard for the quick circulation of the bottle.

Pitt, at his coming into office, was soon surrounded by a chosen phalanx of young men, who participated in his triumph, pressed near him on a day of expected debate, and constituted the resource of his leisure hours. Powis, when describing about this time "the forces led by the right honourable gentleman on the Treasury bench," in his speech of the 9th of March 1784, only a few days previous to the dissolution of Parliament, said, "The first may be called his bodyguard, composed of light young troops, who shoot their little arrows with amazing

<sup>1</sup> Porson is said to have written one hundred and one epigrams on this occasion. The following epigram is, however, better than Porson's best :—

" *Pitt*.—I cannot see the Speaker ! Hal, can you ?  
*Dundas*.—Not see the Speaker ? Hang it ! I see *two*."

dexterity against those who refuse to swear allegiance to their chief." High birth, personal devotion, and political connection, more than talents, formed the ordinary foundation of the Minister's partiality for those distinguished individuals, most of whom, with only one exception, we have since seen elevated to the peerage or loaded with preferments and sinecure appointments. In general, the Duke de Montausier's observation to Louis XIV., when speaking of Versailles, "*Vous avez beau faire, sire; vous n'en ferez jamais qu'un favori sans mérite,*" might well apply to them. With Fox's associates and comrades, Hare,<sup>1</sup> Fitzpatrick, Sheridan, Lord John Townshend, and Burgoyne, they could sustain no competition for mental endowments. Lord Grenville, then Mr. William Grenville, must not, however, be included in this remark. His near connection with the First Minister by consanguinity, when added to his distinguished abilities, placed him on far higher ground. As little will the observation apply to Lord Mornington, since created Marquis Wellesley; to the present Earl of Harrowby, then Mr. Rider; or to Wilberforce—all three men of undisputed talents.

In suavity of temper, magnanimity of disposition, and oblivion of injury or offence, Fox rose superior to Pitt. Even Dundas possessed far more liberality of character, as he manifested on many occasions. I have heard Fox, after dealing out the severest insinuations or accusations against Lord North, when that nobleman was at the head of the Treasury towards the end of the American war, on being convinced that he had exceeded the fair limits of parliamentary attack, or had deviated into personal

<sup>1</sup> The Duchess of Gordon called this grandson of Bishop Hare and son of an apothecary at Winchester "the Hare with many friends." He was Fox's schoolfellow at Eton, and an ever-welcome visitor at Carlton House. He represented Knaresborough, and died in 1804.—D.

abuse, explain, retract, and apologise for his violence or indecorum. Pitt, though he rarely committed such a breach of propriety, and was more measured in his censure or condemnation, seldom, if ever, made concession. He even tried, at an early period of his Ministerial career, to overbear Sheridan by making sarcastic allusion to the theatrical employments or dramatic avocations of that eminent member, as forming a more appropriate object of his attention than parliamentary declamation and pursuits,—allusions which, however classic the language in which they were couched, might be justly deemed illiberal in their nature. But Sheridan, with admirable presence of mind, turned against him his own weapons, leaving behind him the impression of his genius, drawn from the very key on which Pitt had pressed, when he applied to the First Minister the denomination of the “Angry Boy,” with which Ben Jonson furnished him on the instant.

In classic lore and acquirements of every kind, as drawn from Greek and Roman sources—

“The fount at which the panting mind assuages  
Her thirst of knowledge,”—

Pit and Fox might fairly dispute for pre-eminence; but the latter left his rival far behind in all the variety of elegant information derived from modern history, poetry, and foreign languages. We ought not, indeed, to be surprised at this superiority if we recollect that Fox was above ten years older than Pitt; that he nourished a much stronger natural attachment to polite letters, and enjoyed infinitely more leisure for its indulgence. Pitt, as far as my means of information ever enabled me to form a judgment, possessed comparatively small general acquaintance with those authors which furnish the libraries of men of taste and science. How, indeed, we may ask, should he ever have attained it? His studies, after leaving

Cambridge, were principally directed to qualify him for the profession of the law. Several months before he completed his twenty-second year he found himself, with a very slender fortune, placed in the House of Commons, which situation opened to his aspiring and ambitious mind the most brilliant prospects of elevation. From that period, if we except the short prorogation of 1781—for in 1782 he was Chancellor of the Exchequer, and in 1783 he visited the Continent—what portion of time could he devote to literary pursuits or accomplishment? Near seven years later than the period of which I speak, in the autumn of the year 1790, when it was expected that a rupture would have taken place between the crowns of Great Britain and Spain respecting the affair of Nootka Sound,<sup>1</sup> he was pleased to consult me on various points connected with the subject of contest. Being alone with him in Downing Street, and conversing on the Spanish possessions lying along the shore of the Pacific Ocean, he owned to me that he not only never had read, but, he assured me, he never had heard of Commodore Byron's narrative of his shipwreck in the "Wager" on the coast of Patagonia—a book to be found in every circulating library. At his request I procured and sent him the work. But on the other hand, the rapidity and facility with which he acquired, digested, and converted to purposes of utility his knowledge was altogether wonderful. With the French language he was grammatically conversant, but at twenty-five he spoke it imperfectly, and wrote in it without freedom or facility, though he subsequently improved in these particu-

<sup>1</sup> A British settlement was formed here in 1786 (eight years after the discovery of the Sound by Cook), to supply China with furs. In 1789 the Spaniards took forcible possession of the place; the quarrel that ensued was amicably arranged in 1790 by a concession of free trade there to England.—D.

lars. I repeat it, as a Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, he could have sustained no competition with Fox in all the branches of solid or of ornamental attainment that qualify for such a situation.

It is not easy to decide relative to their respective superiority in eloquence. Fox's oratory was more impassioned: Pitt's could boast greater correctness of diction. The former exhibited, while speaking, all the tribunitian rage: the latter displayed the consular dignity. But it must not be forgotten that the one commonly attacked, while the other generally defended; and it is more easy to impugn or to censure than to justify measures of state. Had they changed positions in the House, the character of their speeches would doubtless have taken a tinge, though it would not have been radically altered, by such a variation in their political destiny. From Fox's finest specimens of oratory much, as it struck me, might generally have been taken away without injuring the effect or maiming the conclusion. To Pitt's speeches nothing appeared wanting, yet there was no redundancy. He seemed as by intuition to hit the precise point when, having attained his object, as far as eloquence could effect it, he sat down. This distinctive and opposite characteristic of the two men arose, partly at least, from an opinion or principle which Fox had adopted. He assumed that one-third of his audience was always either absent, or at dinner, or asleep; and he therefore usually made a short resumption or epitome of his arguments for the benefit of this part of the members. So that, after speaking at great length, and sometimes apparently summing up as if about to conclude, whenever he saw a considerable influx of attendance he began anew, regardless of any impatience manifested on the part of those whose at-

tention was already exhausted by long exertion. Pitt never condescended to avail himself of such a practice, neither lengthening his speeches nor abbreviating them from any considerations except the necessity of fully developing his ideas. Indeed, so well was the relative proportion of time generally taken up by the two speakers on great occasions known to the old members, that they calculated whenever Fox was three hours on his legs Pitt replied within two. In all the corporeal part of oratory, he observed likewise more moderation and measure than Fox, who, on great occasions, seemed, like the Pythian priestess, "to labour with th' inspiring god," and to dissolve in floods of perspiration. The Minister, it is true, became sometimes warmed with his subject and had occasionally recourse to his handkerchief, but rather in order to take breath or to recall his thoughts by a momentary pause than from physical agitation.

A vital defect in Pitt's composition as a man must be esteemed his want of economy : it was hereditary, constitutional, and remained insurmountable down to the close of his life. The great Earl of Chatham, his father, had to contend with the same characteristic deficiency, and never understood, as Lord Holland had done, the art of accumulating a fortune. But the first Mr. Pitt, besides the lucrative sinecure of the Privy Seal, which he held during several years, enjoyed the estate of Burton Pynsent in the county of Somerset, bequeathed to him by Sir William Pynsent,<sup>1</sup> together with a pension of £3000 a year bestowed on him by the crown.<sup>2</sup> None of these possessions, however, descended to his second son, whose whole patrimonial inheritance amounted, I

<sup>1</sup> The legacy was worth about £40,000. Sir William Pynsent was nearly ninety when he died, and knew Pitt only as a statesman.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> For three lives—himself, his wife, and his eldest son, the second Lord Chatham.—ED.

believe, only to £5000, and it never received any ostensible augmentation except a legacy of £3000, bequeathed him in October 1787 by the Duke of Rutland. We may therefore be enabled with these data to form some idea of the elevation of Pitt's mind, his contempt for money, and his disregard of every selfish or interested object, when, on Sir Edward Walpole's decease in January 1784, he disdained to take the Clerkship of the Pells in the Exchequer, though, as the head of that department, he might have conferred it on himself, though Lord Thurlow pressed him not to reject such a fair occasion of rendering himself independent, and though every man in the kingdom must have approved the act on an impartial survey of his situation, for he might not have retained his official employments during a single week. Perhaps it is to be regretted that he should have made such a sacrifice of private interest to glory, but it operated throughout his whole life, and even beyond the grave, by its effect on Parliament and on the nation. Antiquity cannot exhibit any more shining instance of disinterestedness, either drawn from Theban and Athenian story or from the consular ages of Rome. Juvenal's observation on human nature—

“*Quis enim virtutem amplectitur ipsam,  
Præmia si tollas?*”

did not seem to apply to Pitt. Possibly, however, on a deep estimate, he found even his pecuniary recompense in this noble act of renunciation. The House of Commons would hardly have bestowed the posthumous marks of solid admiration and respect which they voted in 1806 on any Minister who had enjoyed during two-and-twenty years a sinecure place of £3000 per annum in addition to his official emoluments.

The salaries and other advantages annexed to the place of First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, both of which he held, even though unaided by any private fortune, yet undoubtedly, with prudent management, might have been found adequate to Pitt's annual expenditure; but, unsupported by economy, they proved wholly insufficient for the purpose. When he was appointed First Minister, his youngest sister, Lady Harriet Pitt, resided with him, and superintended his establishment in Downing Street. She possessed, in addition to other eminent intellectual endowments, that quality which her father and brother wanted; and so long as she personally controlled his domestic affairs, I have been assured that they were restrained within very reasonable limits. Unfortunately for him, in September 1785, within two years after he came into power, Lady Harriet gave her hand to Mr. Elliot, who became Lord Elliot on his father's demise; and subsequent to her marriage Pitt's pecuniary concerns fell into the utmost disorder. Debts accumulated, and it was commonly asserted that the collectors of the taxes found more difficulty in levying them from the Chancellor of the Exchequer than from almost any other inhabitant of Westminster. Even tradesmen's bills, particularly those of coach-makers, were said to be frequently paid, not in money, but by ordering new articles, and thus augmenting the pressure of the evil itself.

It was not till 1792, on the Earl of Guildford's decease (better known to us as Lord North),<sup>1</sup> that Mr. Dundas, having learnt the intelligence, and knowing his friend's disinterestedness, hurried to St. James's, went into the closet, and asked of his

<sup>1</sup> Lord North succeeded to his father's titles in 1790. After his death in 1792, his three sons successively inherited the title of Earl of Guilford.—ED.



Majesty the place of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports for Pitt, which office the King immediately conferred on him, though it had been previously intended by the sovereign, as I know, for the late Duke of Dorset. Such was the superiority of the First Minister's mind to every object of personal emolument or acquisition, that he disdained to solicit any individual reward, even from the prince whom he had so long and so efficaciously served. For my knowledge of this curious and interesting fact I am indebted to the Right Honourable William Dundas, nephew to the late Lord Melville, whose authority on such a point, I presume, is superior to all contradiction. The salary, which in Mr. Pitt's person was rendered nominally £3500 a year, might have formed a very handsome addition to his official income; but the necessary deductions of many kinds to be made from that sum, the expenses which he incurred in altering or embellishing Walmer Castle, and, more than both these sources of expenditure, his facility or liberality in granting small pensions to invalided or aged artificers of various descriptions belonging to the Cinque Ports — so many combined causes reduced the real receipt below half its ostensible amount. Yet when he went out of office in 1801, loaded with debts, he possessed no other independent means of subsistence.<sup>1</sup> It is indeed true that as early as 1790 he had been elected Master of the Trinity House; but I have always considered that appointment, though highly honourable, as unproductive of any pecuniary emolument. When we reflect on the

<sup>1</sup> When, in 1789, Pitt was about retiring from the Ministry without fortune and in debt, a number of gentlemen of the City resolved to raise a sum of £100,000, to be presented to him as a free gift, each subscriber engaging never to divulge the name of himself or of any other person contributing; but Pitt refused the offer. In 1801 Pitt's debts were estimated at £45,064, and a sum of £11,700 was advanced by fourteen contributors towards their payment. There were ten contributors of £1000 each, three of £500 each, and one of £200.—ED.

circumstances here enumerated, we may regret, but we cannot wonder, that after holding the reins of Government almost his whole life, and conferring so many dignities, as well as offices, during a period, taken altogether, of near nineteen years, he should ultimately die, not only poor, but oppressed under a burden of debt. Yet must we distinguish between a sort of virtuous, or at least venial poverty, if I may so express myself, caused by want of economy, in a man who devoted his whole exertions to the public service, and Fox's similar wants, produced by a rage for play, which not only reduced him from affluence to a state of dereliction, but finally compelled him to accept an eleemosynary contribution from his political and personal friends, in order to furnish him with the means of subsistence.<sup>1</sup> It is unnecessary to contrast the two positions or characters, which undoubtedly excite in our minds very opposite sensations, and awaken widely different degrees of moral censure or disapprobation.

Pitt's great superiority over his antagonist, and his consequent Ministerial success, flowed principally from two causes. The first was his admirable judgment. That intelligence restrained his parliamentary exertions during the American war, and induced him, while heaping accusations on the Ministers, to spare the King. I know that he received a hint soon after he began to speak in the House of Commons, warning him to avoid that rock on which Fox had split, and to be cautious how he mentioned or alluded with severity to the

<sup>1</sup> "When the affairs of Charles Fox were in their more than ordinary embarrassed state, his friends raised a subscription among themselves for his relief. One of them remarking that it would require some delicacy in breaking the matter to him, and adding that 'he wondered how Fox would take it,'—'Take it!' interrupted Selwyn, 'why, *quarterly* to be sure.'"—Jesse's *Selwyn and his Contemporaries*, 1882, vol. i. p. 21.—ED.

royal name. He did not despise the advice. The same superior intelligence impelled him, when Lord North was driven from power, to refuse office under an Administration which, he foresaw, from its component materials, could only be of short duration. It dictated to him to take the Chancellorship of the Exchequer under Lord Shelburne, but it equally suggested to him the impracticability of retaining the situation of First Minister when pressed by his Majesty in March 1783 to assume that high office after the Earl of Shelburne's resignation. In renouncing a situation so flattering to his pride and his ambition, though it lay completely within his grasp, he exhibited, when not twenty-four, the deepest and calmest discernment; for if he had yielded to his own inclinations and the wishes of the sovereign, it seems certain that he could not have maintained himself in power against Fox and Lord North. They had not then committed any other act calculated to excite the public condemnation, except the mere approximation of their respective parliamentary adherents, followed by their own political union.

Pitt, with consummate judgment, waited till the Coalition had brought forward the East India Bill and could no longer recede, in order to profit by their indiscretion. He accepted in December the two employments which, nine months earlier, he had wisely declined, exhibiting on both occasions equal ability; but he never associated Lord Shelburne to his power, nor allowed him any place in the Cabinet. His whole conduct while struggling against Fox's majority in the House of Commons during successive months, which I witnessed, formed the triumph of paramount capacity over imprudent ambition and rapacious precipitation. If we were to pursue the comparison lower down in Pitt's life,

we should trace the same effects resulting from similar causes during the critical conflict which took place between him and Fox in the winter of 1788, when the latter, instead of advising the heir-apparent to accept the Regency under any conditions, however apparently severe, on which Parliament might think proper to confer it during the uncertain nature of the King's malady, laid claim to it for his Royal Highness as a matter of right. The Minister instantly perceived, and fastened like an eagle on his adversary's error, which, by producing delay, happily allowed time for his Majesty's recovery, and of course perpetuated the duration of Pitt's power. But this part of his Ministerial conduct belongs to another period of the "Memoirs of my Own Time."

The second point that gave him an ascendant over Fox arose from the correctness of his deportment and regularity of his private life. This circumstance, which, under Charles II., would have counted for little in the scale, operated with decisive effect in his favour under a prince such as George III. Nor did it produce less beneficial results among the people at large. Some internal guarantee, drawn from moral character, high integrity, and indisputable rectitude of intention, seemed indeed necessary in order to justify to the nation the choice of the sovereign when intrusting to a young man destitute of property the finances and concerns of an empire reduced by a long and disastrous war to a state of great depression. Pitt possessed, in fact, no other stake to deposit as a security for his good conduct, unless we take into our calculation his possible reversion of the Earldom of Chatham. He had likewise to contend, like Epaminondas in antiquity, with another deficiency. During the whole course of the eighteenth

century, and I believe I may say since the accession of Elizabeth, he is the only English First Minister who lived and died in a state of celibacy. He was not therefore attached to the commonwealth by those endearing ties which blend the statesman with the husband and the father, thus giving a species of compound pledge for exemplary conduct to the country. Henry Pelham, who presided over the councils of Great Britain during ten years under George II., was, it is true, like Pitt, only a younger son of a noble house; but his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, might be justly considered as one of the greatest subjects in fortune as well as in rank to be found within the kingdom. Mr. Pelham, who married a daughter of the Duke of Rutland, had likewise by her a numerous family, and possessed in his own person considerable landed property.

Even Fox, though he remained long unmarried, yet finally entered into that state; and he aspired to have done it much earlier in life, if his efforts for the purpose had not proved unsuccessful. During the early part of Hastings's trial in 1787, he raised his eyes and hopes to the Duke of Newcastle's box in Westminster Hall, where usually sat Miss Pulteney,<sup>1</sup> afterwards created by Pitt Countess of Bath in her own right, then justly esteemed one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom. After exhibiting his great powers of oratory as a public man in the manager's box below, he sometimes ascended in his private capacity to try the effect of his eloquence under the character of a lover. All his friends aided a cause which, by rendering their chief independent

<sup>1</sup> Henrietta Laura Pulteney, only child of Sir William Johnstone Pulteney and his wife Frances, daughter and heiress of Daniel Pulteney (first cousin of William, Earl of Bath). She married in 1794 General Sir James Murray, who took the name of Pulteney, and died in 1808. Sir James died from the explosion of his powder-horn.—ED.

in his fortune, would have healed the pecuniary wounds inflicted by his early indiscretion. General Fitzpatrick, with friendly solicitude, usually kept a place for him near the lady, and for some time the courtship assumed so auspicious an appearance, that I remember Hare, when speculating on the probable issue of the marriage, said, with admirable humour, that "they would inevitably be duns, with black manes and tails," alluding to the lady's fair complexion and red hair contrasted with Fox's dark hue. The affair nevertheless terminated, from whatever cause, without success.<sup>1</sup> Pitt, though at different periods of his life he distinguished certain ladies (some of whom I could particularise) by marks of great predilection, and in one instance seemed even to meditate marriage, yet never persisted in the attempt; but his name, descent, abilities, and private character surmounted every impediment to his elevation. Fox could no more have been placed at the head of the Treasury than Dean Swift could have been made Archbishop of Canterbury, or than Lord Bolingbroke under Queen Anne, or the Duke of Wharton under George the First, could have filled the office of First Minister. He wanted, like them, an essential quality. I will not say high moral character, for I believe his honour, integrity, and probity were above all impeachment or reproach; but correct moral deportment. Of this deficiency he was himself sensible, and was said to have once expressed his conviction of it in laconic but forcible terms. I resume the progress of events.

While Pitt unquestionably anticipated the probable necessity for his ultimately recurring to the measure of calling together a new House of Commons, he by

<sup>1</sup> Fox's marriage with Mrs. Armstead, who had long presided under that name at St. Anne's Hill, was not celebrated, or not acknowledged, till 1794.—ED.

no means disdained to avail himself of all the means and modes that could be suggested for diminishing, and if possible annihilating, the majority to which Fox owed his actual consequence. Every effort was exerted by himself and by his friends in order to accomplish that point. The recess, limited to little more than a fortnight, allowed him only a very short space for exertion; and the numbers which had hitherto supported the Coalition during the progress of the East India Bill through the House in every stage generally amounted to double, or almost double, the votes on the opposite side. Two hundred and seventeen members had voted for its commitment, a great proportion in an assembly then composed only of five hundred and fifty-eight persons. The reduction of such a superiority, first to something approaching an equality, and finally to a minority, might well seem a hopeless undertaking, even admitting all the venality, want of principle, or tergiversation with which that assembly has been so often reproached. Much more success was, however, expected from applications addressed to the part of the Coalition which might be considered as holding to Lord North than from the adherents of the Rockingham party, or among the personal supporters and friends of Fox. Many of Lord North's political connections, who had, in fact, voted with him on the India Bill, under a conviction of the measure itself having obtained the consent of the crown, were naturally disposed to withdraw their support, if not to transfer their services, on the discovery of their mistake. There existed only three ways by which Fox's majority might be reduced—in consequence of the attendance of new members who had not hitherto taken any part; by the future non-attendance of those who had supported the Coalition up to the present time; and, lastly, by desertion

from the enemy's ranks over to those of the new Administration. The latter votes, as counting double, of course became most sought after and valued.

A separation had, indeed, already taken place among Lord North's immediate personal followers. Of the two former Secretaries of the Treasury, Sir Grey Cooper continued to support him invariably; but Robinson, conceiving himself absolved from any obligation to accompany his ancient principal through all the consequences of his new political alliances, quitted altogether that party. No man in the House of Commons, as I have had occasion to remark, knew so much of its original composition, the means by which every individual attained his seat, and, in many instances, how far and through what channels he might prove accessible. Though Pitt made the fifth First Minister whom that Parliament had beheld in the short space of little more than twenty-one months, yet the individual members composing the Lower House had undergone only a very trifling variation since the general election. Recourse was therefore had to Robinson, under the present delicate and arduous circumstances of public affairs, in order to obtain his active exertions for Government. He complied with the application, and unquestionably rendered very essential service. I have always considered the Earldom of Abergavenny as the remuneration given by the crown for that assistance, though I by no means assert it as a fact. Robinson's only daughter and child had been married some years before to the Honourable Henry Neville, eldest son of Lord Abergavenny, who was placed at the head of the list of Earls created by Pitt on the 11th of May 1784, not five months after the facts took place under our discussion.

While I am engaged on the subject of the House of Commons, and of the influence or corruption by



which it has been always managed, particularly during the last and a part of the present reign, I shall relate some curious particulars which cannot perhaps be introduced with more propriety than in this place. We may see in the "Memoirs of Prince Eugene of Savoy" (which work, though composed under its present form by the late Prince de Ligne, with whom I was well acquainted at Vienna, is founded on original papers or documents) what influence he attributes to the "presents of champagne and burgundy" made by Marshal Tallard, then a prisoner of war in England, to "Right Honourable Members of Parliament." Nay, the Prince asserts positively that in the same year, 1711, when he came over in person to London with the avowed object of retaining if possible Queen Anne and her Ministers in the grand alliance against France, he had recourse himself to corruption. "*Je fis des présens,*" says he, "*car on peut acheter beaucoup en Angleterre.*" If such constituted the ordinary practice under the last princess of the Stuart line at a time that Parliaments were not septennial but only triennial, we may be quite assured that they did not become more virtuous after the accession of the present reigning family, when the House of Commons was elected for seven years.

Proofs of the venality practised by Sir Robert Walpole during the whole course of his long Administration it seems unnecessary to produce, as that Minister did not disclaim or resent the imputation. Nor did his political adversaries disclaim, whatever professions of public virtue they might make, to have recourse to the same unworthy expedients in order to effect his removal. We have the authority of a member of their own body for the fact. "Don Carlos" (Frederick, Prince of Wales), says Mr. Glover in his "Memoirs," recently published, "told

me that it cost him twelve thousand pounds in corruption, particularly among the Tories, to carry the Westminster and Chippenham elections in 1742, and other points, which compelled Lord Orford, at that time Sir Robert Walpole, to quit the House of Commons." It is difficult to adduce more satisfactory and unimpeachable proof of any fact, as Glover was a man of strict veracity. Neither was Mr. Pelham, who after a short interval succeeded Sir Robert, and held his situation nearly eleven years, though he may be justly esteemed one of the most upright statesmen who presided in the councils of George II., less liable to the accusation of corrupting Parliament than was his predecessor.

A friend of mine, a man of rank and high character, whom I do not name, because, being still alive, I consider myself not at liberty to divulge it, but whose name would at once stamp the veracity and authenticity of whatever he relates, has frequently assured me that about the year 1767 he was personally acquainted with Roberts, who had been Secretary of the Treasury under Mr. Pelham, but who was then old, infirm, and near his end. He lies buried in Westminster Abbey, in Poets' Corner, where his epitaph describes him as "the most faithful secretary of the Right Honourable Henry Pelham." This gentleman conversing with Roberts upon the events of those times when he held a place under Administration, and particularly on the manner in which the House of Commons was then managed, Roberts avowed, without reserve, that while he remained at the Treasury there were a number of members who regularly received from him their payment or stipend at the end of every session in bank-notes.<sup>1</sup> The sums, which varied according to

<sup>1</sup> I am sorry to read these things of Mr. Pelham, whom everybody loved, and Garrick praised so sweetly, saying—

the merits, ability, and attendance of the respective individuals, amounted usually from £500 to £800 per annum. "This largess I distributed," added Roberts, "in the Court of Requests on the day of the prorogation of Parliament. I took my stand there, and as the gentlemen passed me in going to or returning from the House, I conveyed the money in a squeeze of the hand. Whatever person received the Ministerial bounty in the manner thus related, I entered his name in a book, which was preserved in the deepest secrecy, it being never inspected by any human being except the King and Mr. Pelham. On the decease of that Minister in 1754, his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Fox, afterwards Lord Holland, and others of the Cabinet who succeeded to power, anxious to obtain an accurate knowledge of the private state of the House of Commons, and particularly to ascertain the names of all the indivi-

"Let others hail the rising sun,  
I bow to that whose course is run,  
Which sets in endless night,  
Whose rays benignant blessed our isle,  
Made peaceful nature round us smile,  
With calm but cheerful light.

See, as you pass the crowded street,  
Despondence clouds each face you meet,  
All their lost friend deplore;  
You read in every pensive eye,  
You hear in every broken sigh  
That Pelham is no more."

This ode, from whence I have selected two stanzas, not the best, and a comical thing called "One News Writer's Petition," that came out a very little while before, give one the impression of his having been a very honest man. I am quite sorry Wraxall's book tends so much to destroy that impression.

Pelham's death was curious, and he thought so; for it was his favourite maxim in politics never to stir an evil which lies quiet. "And now," said he upon his deathbed to his doctor, "I die for having acted in contradiction to my own good rule—taking unnecessary medicines for a stone which lay still enough in my bladder, and might perhaps never have given me serious injury. But so it is, that though death certainly does *strike* the dart, it is often vice or folly poisons it, with regard to this world or the world to come."—P.

duals who received money during Mr. Pelham's life, applied to me for information. They further demanded of me to surrender the book, in which, as they knew, I was accustomed to enter the above particulars. Conceiving a compliance to be dishonourable, I peremptorily refused to deliver it up, except by the King's express command and to his Majesty in person. In consequence of my refusal, they acquainted the King with the circumstance, who sent for me to St. James's, where I was introduced into the closet, more than one of the above-mentioned Ministers being present. George II. ordered me to return him the book in question, with which injunction I immediately complied. At the same time taking the poker in his hand, he put it into the fire, made it red hot, and then, while we stood round him, he thrust the book into the flames, where it was immediately reduced to ashes. He considered it, in fact, as too sacred and confidential a register to be thus transferred over to the new Ministers, and as having become extinct with the Administration of Mr. Pelham."

It is unquestionable that the Duke of Newcastle, though he failed in getting possession of his brother's secret information, in consequence of Roberts's firmness, yet pursued the same mode of management on becoming himself First Lord of the Treasury. Under Lord Bute's Government, when, from a variety of causes, a violent opposition in Parliament arose, which required the whole power of Ministry to stem, similar practices were carried to a greater length. John Ross Mackay, who had been private secretary to the Earl of Bute, and afterwards, during seventeen years, was Treasurer of the Ordnance, a man with whom I was personally acquainted, frequently avowed the fact. He lived to a very advanced age, sat in several Parliaments, and only died,

I believe, in 1796. A gentleman of high professional rank in the navy, and of unimpeached veracity, who is still alive, told me that dining at the late Earl of Besborough's in Cavendish Square in the year 1790, where only four persons were present, including himself, Ross Mackay, who was one of the number, gave them the most ample information upon this subject. Lord Besborough having called after dinner for a bottle of excellent champagne, a wine to which Mackay was partial, and the conversation accidentally turning on the means of governing the House of Commons, Mackay said that "money formed, after all, the only effectual and certain method." "The peace of 1763," continued he, "was carried through and approved by a pecuniary distribution. Nothing else could have surmounted the difficulty. I was myself the channel through which the money passed. With my own hand I secured above 120 votes on that most important question to Ministers: £80,000 were set apart for the purpose. Forty members of the House of Commons received from me £1000 each. To eighty others I paid £500 a-piece. Mackay afterwards confirmed more than once this fact to the gentleman above mentioned, who related it to me. He added that Lord Besborough appeared himself so sensible of the imprudence as well as impropriety of the avowal made by Mackay at his table, that his Lordship sent to him, and to the fourth person who had been present on the occasion (the late Rev. Mr. Dutens), next morning, to entreat of them on no account to divulge it during Mackay's life.<sup>1</sup> What attestation so strong of the truth of this anecdote can be produced as the testimony of the late Bishop

<sup>1</sup> These stories of Roberts and Mackay were pronounced by the *Quarterly Review* (xiii. 213) incredible. The *Monthly Review* (xcii., 1820, p. 196), on the other hand, is quite prepared to believe them.—ED.  
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of Llandaff? He expressly informs us, in the "Anecdotes of his Life" just published, that the Earl of Shelburne, then First Minister, assured him on the 17th of February 1783, that "he," Lord Shelburne, "well knew above £60,000 had been expended among the members of the House of Commons in procuring an approbation of the peace of 1763."

Wilkes was, however, perfectly well instructed on the subject, and made no secret of his information, even at the time when the treaty of Fontainebleau was a recent transaction. In his memorable letter addressed from "Paris, 22d October 1764," to the electors of Aylesbury, he says: "I will not compliment the present profligate majority in the House of Commons so far as to say they were so well informed that they knew the exact truth of every assertion in the *North Briton*, No. 45. One particular, however, came within their knowledge; the means by which it is hinted that the entire approbation of Parliament, even of the preliminary articles, of the late inglorious peace was obtained; and the previous step to the obtaining that entire approbation, the large debt contracted on the Civil List. They knew this assertion was extremely true, and I am as ready to own that it was extremely scandalous." It is impossible to convey a charge of such a nature in less equivocal or ambiguous language.

Relative to the three successive Administrations after Lord Bute's secession from power, namely, that of George Grenville, of the Marquis of Rockingham, and of the Duke of Grafton, which comprised the whole period of time between April 1763 and January 1770, I can state nothing from my own personal knowledge. Bradshaw conducted that department, as is well known, under the Duke of Grafton. The same system certainly continued

to be acted on during the period of the American war, when Robinson, and under him Brummell, were its agents. I remember Mr. Whitbread, with whom I was well acquainted, one of the most upright, honest, and benevolent men who ever sat in Parliament, at that time member for Bedford, rising in his place on the 19th of March 1782, stated to the House that during Lord North's Administration many millions had been lost to the nation by exorbitant contracts and wasteful bargains. "Some of the former," added he, "are so lucrative, that even though thousands of pounds might be given for them, yet they would produce a large profit. I do not charge the noble Lord at the head of the Treasury with ever receiving one penny of such money. I believe he never did; but the individuals who transacted those matters at the Treasury are well known. Nor is it any secret to whom the contracts in question are given by favour or preference. That all the business of the Treasury, Admiralty, Navy, Victualling, and Ordnance is conducted on the same corrupt principles is a fact beyond dispute." Lord North was not present when Mr. Whitbread spoke, but no denial of these allegations was made or attempted by any of his friends.

Burke on the following day, a day memorable in the reign of George III., as on it Lord North laid down his power, observed in the metaphorical and elevated style familiar to him: "We have witnessed, Mr. Speaker, for numerous years, the system of corruption advancing. We have beheld it with melancholy and depression. For, from the prodigious power of that corruption, from the towers and battlements with which it was fortified, we nourished no hopes of being able to overthrow it. We remained, therefore, from our dejection, inactive. Despair rendered us submissive. This torpor gave

to the enemy additional force. It even gave them an appearance of stability, by which delusive advantage weak men were seduced to join them, and wicked men became confirmed in their adherence." Such was the language held at that time within the walls of the House of Commons. I incline, nevertheless, strongly to doubt whether towards the termination of Lord North's Ministry these practices subsisted in all their force. In other words, I question whether any individual member of the House was paid for his vote and support in bank-notes, as it would appear had been done under Walpole, Pelham, and most if not all their successors down to that period. More refinement had insensibly been introduced into the distribution of pecuniary gratifications, which were conveyed in oblique shapes, such as lottery tickets, scrip, jobs, contracts, and other beneficial forms, by which the majority was kept together during near seven years, in defiance of a most unfortunate if not an ill-conducted war.

Sawbridge, who, without the learning or the talents of Algernon Sydney, possessed as republican a spirit as that illustrious and unfortunate individual,<sup>1</sup> put a case hypothetically in the course of one of his speeches, which the House perfectly understood. I was present on the occasion, which happened in March 1781, under Lord North's Administration, during the discussion of the loan negotiated in that session. Sawbridge's words were nearly these: "Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, it may chance at some future period—for the age is too virtuous to admit its possibility in these days—that a member of

<sup>1</sup> When Sawbridge was one of the Sheriffs of London, he five times returned Wilkes as truly elected, in defiance of the House and a threat of a bill of pains and penalties from the Government. He was a clever, amiable, and wealthy man. He died in 1795.—D.



Parliament may retire behind the Speaker's chair with the First Lord of the Treasury, and engage to support him on all questions, provided he (the member) shall be allowed to subscribe for £10,000 of the present loan." Lord North, when Sawbridge sat down, instantly rose, in order to answer, and to deny or to refute, other passages of his speech; but to the allusion above cited he made no reply, nor attempted to rebut such an imputation, probably because he knew that Sawbridge, if contradicted, could name his man. Neither was he called to order for it. Indeed, Fox, Burke, George Byng, and others of the Opposition of that period, made no scruple of advancing similar charges without circumlocution or delicacy. Sir George Savile, on the 12th of June in the same year, 1781, exceeded in severity, or rather in asperity, anything that I witnessed, and he did it with perfect impunity. After branding the loan recently negotiated with the epithets of venal, corrupt, and disgraceful, he added, that "such a measure constituted an act of plunder and robbery committed on the nation, in order to bribe with the spoil those members of the House who persisted in a conspiracy for the destruction of their country. The Minister might just as well say in plain terms to his followers, I know that you disapprove this ruinous and accursed war with America, but as it is indispensable to prosecute it for the preservation of my employment, provided you consent to raise thirteen millions on your constituents, I will allow you to share one million of the money among yourselves, who are my accomplices." Not a word was said from the Treasury bench, nor any indignation expressed at so unqualified an accusation.

Fox observed no measures when declaiming against the asserted corruption of Parliament. "The

Minister," exclaimed he, "well aware that he must die with the present war, has encountered shame and embraced it in order to produce its continuance. His supporters well know that their payment, like his own bread, depends on its prosecution. The war begets extraordinaries, which beget loans, which beget douceurs, which beget members of this House." Such was the language of Opposition in 1781. I heard Fox pronounce those words above cited. In thus endeavouring to vilify and degrade the First Minister, he only looked to the immediate object of overturning Lord North's Administration, unconscious within how short a time he should be induced to form a Coalition with the very nobleman whom he had denounced for successive years as the destroyer of his native country. In February 1782, Burke, pleading the cause of Hohen, the Jew, who had suffered in his property at the capture of St. Eustatius, Jenkinson, Secretary at War, demanded "what was the specific object that he had in view? Did he mean to move for a grant of public money to the petitioner?" If so, he entreated Burke to reflect on the consequences to which such a precedent would lead. "Oh!" answered he, "Ministers may easily make compensation to Mr. Hohen without putting their hand in the public purse. They may give him a slice of the loan, for those profits are not esteemed public money, or they may place him *en croupe* of some overgrown contractor."

One of the most humiliating scenes that I ever witnessed, as affecting Lord North in his Ministerial capacity, and which occasioned him the greatest embarrassment, took place just at the time when Burke made these severe animadversions. A contract of a most improvident nature had been concluded with a member of the House, an East India

Director, one of the two representatives for a Somersetshire borough, by the Board of Ordnance. The article furnished was saltpetre, for which a very exorbitant price was given to the contractor. George Byng, aided by Hussey and by Colonel Barré, with most meritorious and indefatigable pertinacity, traced, developed, and exposed the whole transaction. Lord Townshend, then Master-General of the Ordnance, disavowed any knowledge whatever of it, by the mouth of his friend Courtenay, and reprobated the business. Under these distressing circumstances, the First Minister had no other refuge or means of extrication than to protest his total ignorance of the contract, the terms of which he admitted to be enormous, and he therefore proposed to omit the article of saltpetre, amounting to near £150,000, if the House would vote the remaining articles of the Ordnance estimates. Fox launched out on the occasion into severe as well as indignant comments on the Chancellor of the Exchequer's conduct. No reply was made by Lord North, and on the question being put for receiving the report, Ministers carried it only by a majority of thirty; the respective numbers being one hundred and twenty-two and ninety-two.

Lord North, when First Minister, was supposed to command full one hundred and seventy members at his absolute devotion, who were prepared to vote with him upon every question; nor would his head indeed have been secure from 1777 down to 1782 unless he could have counted upon such a steady and numerous support, at a time when every month teemed with misfortunes or defeats. Of this great parliamentary body only a comparatively small portion, however, continued to adhere to him after he joined with Fox, and many more had quitted him on the first introduction of the India Bill, or sub-

sequent to its rejection. Still, even in the last days of December 1783, when dismissed from employment, he remained the nominal head of a considerable party, upon many individuals composing which it was natural to suppose that an impression might be made by representations addressed to their principles, their passions, or their interests. Nor can Pitt, standing as he did in the critical as well as hazardous predicament of having accepted the first offices of government unsupported in one House of Parliament, be blamed for availing himself of every fair or honourable means to diminish the majority possessed by his adversaries. I am at the same time persuaded, from the elevation of his mind and the purity of his principles, that he was incapable of authorising, no less than Robinson would have disdained to practise, any other methods of procuring adherents than such as the British constitution either recognises, or which are in fact inseparable from its practical existence.

Among the persons of eminence to whom Pitt had recourse for support at this delicate crisis of his Ministerial life, when every parliamentary aid which could sustain him against the Coalition was anxiously sought after, the late Lord Sackville attracted his attention. That nobleman had hitherto taken no active part in the debates during the progress of the East India Bill, though he voted against it personally in both the divisions which took place on the 15th and 17th of December in the House of Peers. He had indeed early considered it to be a measure which would excite great fermentation throughout the country, as well as produce opposition on the part of the crown when its political consequences came to be well appreciated and understood. He even repeatedly predicted that it would probably overturn the Ministry of Lord North and

FOX. Impressed with these sentiments, I know that he exhorted his nephew, the Duke of Dorset, who arrived in London from Paris soon after the session opened, to be cautious how he engaged himself too far in supporting it till he had ascertained and sounded the ground. The Duke profited by the advice. Lord Sackville, besides his own vote and his brother-in-law, Lord Milton's proxy, of which, from his influence over that nobleman's mind, he might be said to dispose in the same House of Parliament, brought in gratuitously two members at East Grinstead—for he had a mind too noble ever to sell either of the seats—thus commanding or influencing four votes, in addition to his own personal weight and connections.

I cannot pass over Lord Milton, who was afterwards created Earl of Dorchester,<sup>1</sup> without saying a few words respecting himself and his family. He descended collaterally, if not directly, from Damer, the famous miser, whom Swift has commemorated; and Lord Milton had attained a very advanced period of life at the time of which I now speak. Neither his person nor his manners were attractive; but, though difficult of access, reserved, and repulsive in his exterior, he possessed solid intellectual parts; and no man of his high rank in the kingdom entertained with greater magnificence. In his youth, the duel which he fought with Earl Paulet<sup>2</sup> had

<sup>1</sup> John Damer, of Milton Abbey in Dorsetshire, was created Lord Milton in the Irish peerage in 1753, and an English peer with the same title in 1762. He was created Earl of Dorchester in 1792, and died in 1798. On the death of his son in 1808 the titles became extinct.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> In 1771, behind Bedford House. Lord Milton received a shot in the stomach. The cause of quarrel was never clearly ascertained. The duel between Lord Byron and Mr. Chaworth was fought in 1765 in a room of the Star and Garter, Pall Mall, by the light of one candle and a dull fire, and without witnesses. They had quarrelled about the preservation of game. Mr. Chaworth was slain. Lord

rendered him scarcely less distinguished than Lord Byron became in consequence of his fatal encounter with Mr. Chaworth; and neither the one nor the other nobleman remained exempt from reflections on the circumstances supposed to have respectively taken place. If Lord Byron was tried by his peers, Lord Milton underwent scarcely a milder inquest from the prejudices imbibed respecting the transaction. At his seat of Milton Abbey in Dorsetshire, where he maintained a gloomy and sequestered splendour, analogous to his character and habits, he had made immense landed purchases, which, exhausting his pecuniary means, extensive as they were, reduced him to a species of temporary distress, and realised Horace's

“Magnas inter opes inops.”

His palace in town, nearly contiguous to Hyde Park,<sup>1</sup> from the secluded life which Lord Milton led, and the very limited number of persons who ever entered within its gates, obtained the denomination of “Milton's Paradise Lost.” Indeed, his very appearance conveyed an idea of “dry and bald antiquity,” misanthropy, and inaccessibility; but when he occasionally unbent himself in select society, his conversation was interesting, often witty, and sometimes cheerful. Of his three sons, I had the honour to know only the second, who succeeded his father as Earl of Dorchester, and was one of the most engaging, lively, but eccentric noblemen of his time. It is difficult to convey an idea of the species of humour that characterised him, which was truly original and irresistibly comic, nor did he commonly impose any severe restraints on its indulgence. Lady Melbourne

Byron was tried by his peers, found guilty of manslaughter, and discharged on paying his fees.—D.

<sup>1</sup> Dorchester House, Park Lane. A new mansion has been built on its site by R. S. Holford, Esq.—ED.

passing him one very cold day in her carriage as he stood conversing with Partington, an eminent solicitor, at the corner of Lower Brook Street, Grosvenor Square, she bowed to him. Unwilling to take off his own hat in the severe state of the atmosphere, he instantly made free with that of Partington, who, having his back towards Lady Melbourne, was not a little surprised at finding himself thus made the involuntary instrument of Damer's good breeding. Having, however, performed this act of civility by proxy, he coolly replaced Partington's hat on the head of its owner, with many apologies for the freedom. He survived his father only a few years, and dying unmarried, a martyr to the gout, the title of Earl of Dorchester expired in his person. I resume the thread of public affairs.

During the Christmas recess, after the adjournment of the two Houses, Lord Sackville went down to his seat at Drayton. Pitt having applied to Lord Walsingham, requesting his exertions to procure Lord Sackville's personal attendance and support in that assembly at a moment of such difficulty, he mentioned my name to the Minister as a person more capable than himself, from the friendship with which Lord Sackville honoured me, of facilitating his wishes on the subject. The nobleman in question subsequently called on me at a very late hour of the night of the 29th of December, after I was in bed, and acquainted me with the above-mentioned circumstances. Impelled by the wish of serving Pitt and supporting His Majesty's Government, I waited on him next morning at his brother Lord Chatham's house in Berkeley Square, where he then resided, and at his desire undertook the service; but I candidly informed him at the same time that, from my knowledge of Lord Sackville's political sentiments, and for the obvious reasons which must

render Lord Howe as well as the Marquis of Carmarthen, who were both members of the new Administration, personally distasteful to him, I doubted his compliance, unless the solicitations were sustained from other quarters. I likewise exhorted him not only to write himself to Lord Sackville, but to procure similar applications from his three personal friends in the Cabinet—the Chancellor, the Lord President (Earl Gower), and Lord Sydney. Pitt readily adopted my suggestion. I then assured him that I would set off on the following day, it being previously settled that the messenger who was to be charged with the Ministerial letters for Drayton should not pass me on the road, but allow me to arrive before him at my destination.

On the ensuing morning, being the 31st of December, I left London very early, in order to have time for conversing with the Duke of Dorset on my way to Lord Sackville. The Duke was then on a visit at Lord Salisbury's at Hatfield. I acquainted him with the object of my journey, in the success of which he co-operated with all his exertions. It was past ten at night when I reached Drayton, in most inclement weather. Lord Sackville, whom I found engaged at chess with his youngest daughter, expressed some surprise mingled with his satisfaction on my first entrance into the apartment; but his natural penetration soon led him to conceive that my visit at such a season must have originated in a deeper motive than friendship or amusement. As soon as we were alone, I therefore frankly told him the cause of my unexpected arrival, and related every circumstance that had taken place, except the advice which I had ventured to offer Pitt respecting applications to be made from his friends in the Cabinet. Next day the messenger brought the dispatches, and Lord Sackville, after perusing them, returned



the answer which I had foreseen, namely, that "though he neither desired nor would accept any office under Ministry, nor ask any favour from the new Administration either for himself or for his connections, yet that his principles and the dutiful submission that he felt towards his Majesty would impel him to give every support to the Government in the present arduous crisis of public affairs." He punctually performed this promise on his return to London, evincing himself a steady friend to the Ministry during the whole future progress of the eventful contest then carrying on in Parliament.

[1st—10th January 1784.] It was not, however, by individual applications of any kind, nor even by private exertions, however successful they might be, nor even by the personal interference of the sovereign himself, that Pitt could have been maintained in office. The public, and the public only, enabled him to defeat the powerful parliamentary phalanx drawn up against him. During the two first weeks of December, while the ultimate fate of the India Bill remained still doubtful, the Committee of Proprietors, which sat unintermittingly in Leadenhall Street, sounded the alarm to the most distant extremities of the kingdom. A member of that committee, who took an active part in their deliberations, assured me that in the circular letters which they addressed to almost every town or corporate body throughout Great Britain, they contented themselves with saying in few words, "Our property and charter are forcibly invaded: look to your own!" This laconic invocation bore some analogy to one of the puritanical appeals made under Charles I. to the English people, when, in the language of Scripture, their leaders exclaimed, "To your tents, O Israel!" A copy of Fox's bill enclosed, which served as the best commentary on the text, soon produced a corresponding

and general effect. Ridicule and satire joined their aid to expose the Coalition to laughter or contempt. Two prints in particular, both conceived with admirable humour, were circulated throughout the metropolis. In one, Fox, under the character of a "political Sampson," appeared carrying away on his shoulders the India House that he had pulled down, out of the windows of which edifice the terrified directors were endeavouring to effect their escape. The other print, denominated "The Triumphal Entry of Carlo Khan into Delhi," displayed the Secretary of State habited in the costume of a Mogul emperor seated on an elephant, whose countenance bore a most striking resemblance to Lord North, and preceded by Burke as his trumpeter.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to conceive the moral operation and wide diffusion of these caricatures through every part of the country.<sup>2</sup>

Towards the commencement of the new year, the First Minister exhibited (perhaps not without profound design) a proof of power which his predecessors had never been able to display during their Administration, by elevating his cousin and active supporter, Thomas Pitt, to the peerage. Burke, only a few days afterwards, alluding to the circumstance in the course of one of his speeches, observed, "A person who was very recently a member of this assembly has just been—not transported—but translated to a place of rest, the House of Peers, which place Lord Chester-

<sup>1</sup> This caricature was by Sayer, and Fox acknowledged that it gave the severest blow to his bill, owing to its great popularity and enormous sale. Pitt rewarded the caricaturist by giving him the offices of Marshal of the Court of Exchequer and Receiver of the Sixpenny Duties.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> When Pitt afterwards introduced his India Bill, there was exhibited a caricature in which was depicted the Company personified as a woman, Charles Fox holding a blunderbuss at her head,—this was termed "Robbery;" whilst Mr. Pitt was picking her pocket of her charter,—this was subscribed "Stealing."—ED.

field used sometimes to denominate the hospital of incurables or of invalids. The person whom I mean is Lord Camelford, who, like Elijah, has been rapt up into the heaven of rest. To whom he has left his cloak it is not my business to inquire." Then, having read several passages from a pamphlet attributed to Thomas Pitt, in which production the constitutional right of the House of Commons to advise the sovereign was strenuously maintained and eloquently enforced, Burke added, "Perhaps this pamphlet may be considered as his cloak, which he has left to his disciple on the Treasury bench." Pitt, who was present, did not condescend to notice such an attack.

Before the month of January elapsed, two other individuals, namely, the Honourable Henry Frederick Carteret, brother of Lord Weymouth, and Edward Eliot, of Port Eliot, member for Cornwall, whose eldest son married Lady Harriet Pitt in the course of the subsequent year, were raised by him to the same dignity.<sup>1</sup> He probably meant to show his adherents as well as his opponents in the House of Commons the facility with which he disposed of the honours of the crown, withheld by the sovereign from the Coalition, and consequently the rewards which might attend their early repairing to the royal standard. In order to counteract this display of Ministerial favour, and with a view to keep their forces together, his antagonists promised a long list of contingent British peerages, exceeding thirty in number, to their principal friends in the Lower House. The names of these gentlemen were in general circulation, though I do not think

<sup>1</sup> Respectively Lord Carteret and Baron Eliot. The former, whose family name was Thynne, took the name of Carteret in accordance with the will of his grandfather, the Earl of Granville, by whom Lord Carteret was named his heir.—D.

proper to enumerate them, and the greater part have since, at different periods subsequent to the French Revolution, received from Pitt the boon which they had failed to obtain from the Coalition Administration.

[*12th January 1784.*] Whatever favourable effect the peerage conferred by the Minister on Thomas Pitt might produce within the walls of the House of Commons, an act which he performed soon afterwards operated far more beneficially for him without doors on the minds of the public. Sir Edward Walpole's death having vacated the lucrative post of Clerk of the Pells in the Exchequer, Pitt, instead of taking it for himself, or conferring it on his brother, Lord Chatham, as might not only have seemed natural and venial, but as he was urged to do by his political friends, immediately gave it to Colonel Barré, in order to extinguish the pension enjoyed by that member ever since Lord Shelburne's accession to power. So unusual a proof of superiority to pecuniary temptation, exhibited by a man nearly destitute of patrimonial fortune, even though it might have originated in deep policy more than in disinterestedness, as his enemies asserted or insinuated, yet attracted just admiration and extorted general applause. Fox, nevertheless, while he admitted the abstract merit of the action itself, did not reprobate with less severity the principles on which Pitt had acquired possession of office. Nor did he display with less ostentation, on the day when the House of Commons met after its short adjournment, the unlimited command that he exercised over the majority of that assembly. Of this empire he gave the most convincing proof, by not only, in parliamentary language, taking possession of the House when it re-assembled, but by precluding the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in subversion of all usage, from being

heard, though charged with a message from the King, till Fox had submitted and carried five resolutions in a committee on the state of the nation. Three of these he moved himself. The other two he delegated to Lord Surrey,<sup>1</sup> who was said to have been selected from among the numerous candidates for parliamentary service in consequence of a classic recommendation. It having been agitated at the meeting of the Opposition held on the preceding evening at Burlington House<sup>2</sup> what individual to choose for bringing forward two of the resolutions next day in the House of Commons, and opinions being divided on the subject, Sheridan, when asked for his sentiment, exclaimed with Richard—

“Saddle white Surrey for the field to-morrow!”

Throughout the whole debate which took place on that occasion, Fox appeared as the arbiter of the scene, propelling, restraining, and directing the machine according to his volition, while the Minister, sustained only by the vast powers of his mind and a consciousness of possessing equally the royal and the popular favour, struggled vainly against the current. He was borne away, together with his followers, by its violence, after making an eloquent and masterly, but ineffectual appeal to the candour of his audience. Erskine, who performed a conspicuous part during the discussion of that memorable night, was placed, if I may so express myself, by Fox in the front ranks. In the course of a long speech, he drew a parallel, or rather a contrast, between the late Secretary of State and the actual First Minister. The latter he depicted as devoured by an

<sup>1</sup> Earl of Surrey, afterwards Duke of Norfolk. He died in the beginning of 1816. His wife, Frances Scudamore, who was said to be insane, was the heiress of the ancient family of Scudamore.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Then inhabited by the Duke of Portland.—ED.

insatiable thirst of power, and throwing into confusion the whole frame of Government in order to attain the highest offices of state without passing through any subordinate employments. "How different," continued he, "has been the progress of my honourable friend! He was not hatched at once into a Minister by the heat of his own ambition. He passed through the inferior gradations and matured his talents in long as well as laborious opposition, arriving by the natural progress of his powerful mind to a superiority of political wisdom universally felt and acknowledged." The parody which he drew, taken from the fourth scene of the third act of "*Hamlet*," depicting Pitt under two opposite points of view, first as a patriot when formerly united with Fox, and subsequently as the creature of secret influence, was well conceived and highly coloured. It did not, however, appear to produce on his hearers the same strong impression which the citations from "*Julius Cæsar*" had done when applied to Fox by Scott and by Arden. Powis, though he continued to speak of the late East India Bill in terms of the strongest abhorrence, as a measure which, if it had not been frustrated, would have inflicted a mortal wound on the frame of our constitution, yet expressed his ardent wish that the state might not lose the benefit of Lord John Cavendish's integrity and of Fox's resplendent abilities. "It would immortalise," he said, "the individual who could effect a reconciliation and produce a union between the late Secretary and the present Chancellor of the Exchequer." Widely different was the language held by Pulteney and by Governor Johnstone. Those two brothers,<sup>1</sup> acting

<sup>1</sup> The elder, William Johnstone, married Frances, only child and heiress of Daniel Pulteney, cousin of William, Earl of Bath, and took the name of Pulteney. He succeeded his eldest brother, Sir James

to a certain degree in concert, extended an invaluable assistance to the new Administration. The elder (Pulteney), who represented Shrewsbury, under a very forbidding exterior, and a still more neglected or almost threadbare dress which he usually wore, manifested strong sense, a masculine understanding, and very independent as well as upright principles of action. Nor did he want a species of eloquence, though it could boast of no elegance or ornament. Representing, in consequence of his marriage, the name and family of Pulteney, so eminent under the reign of George II., inhabiting the mansion of the celebrated Earl of Bath in Piccadilly, and heir-matrimonial to that distinguished nobleman's vast landed property, Pulteney was always heard with attention.

Fox, in a speech of the most inflammatory and criminating description, having rung the changes upon secret influence, concealed advisers, and all the apparatus of the back-stairs, by which he accused his rival of having unconstitutionally ascended to power, and having strenuously exhorted the House to adopt measures without delay for preventing the possibility of their own dissolution, Pulteney rose. "The present moment," observed he, "calls on every man to come forward, and I do not hesitate to assert that, far from approving resolutions calculated to prolong the duration of this assembly, I think, whenever it is suspected that the House of Commons does not speak the sentiments of the people, it ought to be dissolved. That suspicion is strongly entertained at this time because the House has passed a bill which is reprobated by the nation. I will even go farther, and maintain that the more violent are the resolutions into which they enter

Johnstone, in the baronetcy in 1794. He died in 1805, and was succeeded by his nephew, the son of Governor Johnstone.—ED.

with a view to prevent their dissolution, the more ought their political extinction to be accelerated. Much obloquy and clamour have been excited relative to secret influence. But even if it existed, I see no injurious consequences to be apprehended from its operation, for as every measure advised can only be carried into effect by efficient Ministers, they must be devoid of all honour or spirit if they would execute measures not their own. On the other hand, he must be a dastardly Minister who, finding Parliament engaged in prosecuting measures odious to the country, would hesitate to advise their dissolution. And does any man doubt that a House of Commons may speak a language opposed to the sentiments of the country? The support which the noble Lord in the blue ribband found within these walls during successive years when prosecuting the American war may convince the most incredulous person. I do not scruple to declare that the Administration just dismissed from power formed a blockade round the sacred person of the sovereign, and endeavoured to despoil him of every attribute of majesty, except its external decorations or its empty pageantry."

Those opinions which Pulteney always maintained with stern severity but in temperate language, Governor Johnstone enforced with the violence of manner and tone characteristic of his natural disposition. "Instead," exclaimed he, "of admitting that the horrors and rapacity of the East India Bill produced its rejection in the Upper House, the late Secretary tells us that it proceeded entirely from secret influence. But what proof of the pretended fact does he adduce? None. It is merely the catchword of a party, invented to delude the credulous vulgar, and to render the sovereign or his servants unpopular. The same cry was raised



against the noble Lord in the blue ribband, but he now protests that no such influence ever existed to his knowledge. Indeed, he must either confess that such was the case, or subscribe to his own meanness in submitting to it. What stronger attestation can be given that it is chimerical, since the noble Lord, though now acting in perfect concert with his late colleague, yet, when called on to speak from his own personal experience while First Minister, declares the accusation to be totally groundless? The present proceeding on the part of the crown appears to me to have been open and avowed, not concealed. A noble Earl, convinced of the fatal consequences which must have resulted from the East India Bill both to the sovereign and to his fellow-subjects, is said to have demanded an audience, in which he fully explained them to his Majesty. The nobleman in question having related the purport of this interview and its operation on the royal mind to various of his friends, a resistance was set on foot to oppose the passage of the measure itself through the Upper House. A change of Administration naturally and properly followed. What! are we to deny the King the privilege of conversing with his own subjects and nobles? If so, we deprive him of the power of dismissing his Ministers."—"We have doubtless a right to demand that the Government shall be intrusted to men of ability and integrity. But if these qualities are found in the present Cabinet, and if the measures which they propose appear to be wise, it is the height of faction to refuse our support to such men."

Stimulated by the personal attacks made upon him, not only by Fox, but from various other quarters of the House, all accusing him of the attainment of power through secret influence, and demanding an unequivocal explanation of his intentions relative to

the dissolution of Parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer at length came forward in his own person. Having denied in the most positive terms the allegations advanced to prove his unconstitutional attainment of office, "I declare," continued he, "that I came up no back-stairs. When my sovereign was pleased to send for me, in order to know whether I would accept of employment, I was compelled to go to the royal closet; but I know of no secret influence. My own integrity forms my protection against such a concealed agent, and whenever I discover it, the House may rest assured I will not remain one hour in the Cabinet. I will neither have the meanness to act upon advice given by others, nor the hypocrisy to pretend, when the measures of an Administration in which I occupy a place are censured, that they were not of my advising. If any former Ministers are hurt by these charges, to them be the sting. Little did I conceive that I should ever be accused within these walls as the abettor and the tool of secret influence. The nature and the singularity of the imputation only render it the more contemptible. This is the sole reply that I shall ever deign to make. The probity and rectitude of my private as well as of my public principles will ever constitute my sources of action. I never will be responsible for measures not my own, nor condescend to become the instrument of any secret advisers whatever. With respect to the questions put to me on the subject of a dissolution of Parliament, it does not become me to comment on the expressions composing the gracious answer of the sovereign delivered by him from the throne. Neither will I compromise the royal prerogative nor bargain it away in the House of Commons."

This speech, the dignity, elevation, and firmness of which it is not easy to appreciate fully, when we

reflect that it was pronounced by a Minister in an assembly where his adversaries possessed a decided majority, called up Lord North. I think I never saw him so much agitated except once, when Barré was the cause. He could not indeed remain silent under imputations so severe and pointed as were those levelled at him by Pitt. With more indignation than was natural to him, he repelled the charges of meanness and hypocrisy—accusations which, he said, were the most gross and scandalous that he had ever heard within the walls of that House. Sheridan retorted on the Chancellor of the Exchequer with still greater asperity, applying to his Ministerial conduct the very epithets which Pitt had used when addressing Lord North. Rigby even indirectly accused the Minister of putting a fallacy into the secret mouth of Majesty with intention to deceive that assembly. Alluding to the late answer from the throne to the address of the Commons, he observed that “a Newgate solicitor, he was persuaded, would not have descended to so low and scandalous a mode of deception, if any intention existed of dissolving Parliament, after the assurances to the contrary given by the King.” One of Lord Surrey’s motions, calculated to stigmatise his Majesty personally as having permitted “his sacred name to be unconstitutionally used in order to affect the deliberations of Parliament,” was voted by a very considerable majority, in a crowded house, at seven o’clock in the morning. Yet, even amidst so conspicuous a triumph, Fox might find subject for just apprehension in his already diminished numbers. Instead of dividing, as he had done before the recess, nearly two to one upon almost every question, he carried the first division against Administration, upon “going into the committee on the order of the day,” by only thirty-nine, though

425 members voted on the occasion. Lord Surrey's resolution passed, it is true, by fifty-four; but as only 338 persons voted on that question, it appeared evident that the augmentation on the side of Opposition arose from the better discipline and closer attendance enforced among their followers than was observed by the adherents of Government. When Fox, elated by his advantage, attempted, four days afterwards, on the 16th of January, to make the House declare that "the continuance of Ministers in office was contrary to the principles of the constitution," he found his majority declined to twenty-one on a division where 389 members voted. His parliamentary ascendancy, therefore, however apparently imposing, palpably rested on a most precarious and decaying foundation.

[16th January 1784.] Some features of this discussion, which took place on the state of the nation, were of a nature to make a deep impression on the memory. I have already mentioned that during the existence of the Coalition Administration intentions had unquestionably been nourished of transporting Lord North to the Upper House of Parliament—intentions the accomplishment of which was frustrated by the King. Powis, during the debate in question, having expressed his anxious wish that a union might take place between Pitt and Fox, after passing very high encomiums on both as men of transcendent abilities, fitted for the government of a great country, added: "I do not, however, approve of the Coalition between the late Secretary of State and the noble Lord in the blue ribband. The ambition of the former is indeed laudable in itself, but I believe he is not delicate about the means of its gratification. I perceive likewise plainly the difficulty of inducing the two right honourable gentlemen to act together; for the

noble Lord must not be disgraced. He shines indeed no longer, except with a borrowed light. He is a man of whom I cannot say *laudandus*, but *ornandus*, *tollendus*. I would that such could be the case." Lord North, in the course of his speech, having alluded, with great good-humour, to Powis's observations, however painful, on his shining with a borrowed lustre, observed that a classic expression had been applied to him, though with the difference of a monosyllable—*NON laudandus, ornandus, tollendus*. "I hope," continued he, "*tollendus* is not to be understood in the worse sense. It is not meant to kill me. It is only intended that I should be *ornandus*—in vulgar English, kicked up-stairs. But, sir, I feel no inclination to be kicked up-stairs. I should be very unwilling to stand in the way of any political agreement which might be beneficial to the country, yet I will not go up to the House of Peers. I will remain in this assembly for the purpose of defending my honour and character. If, in the course of nature, such an event should indeed take place, I shall esteem it a very great distinction. I mean, provided the present Ministers will suffer this House to retain its appropriate privileges in the British frame of constitution. If they do not suffer any constitution at all to survive, then I will repair to that House as to a place of rest, a place of sleep, where I may repose during the rest of my life. But neither my honour nor my character will allow me at present to accept of a peerage. Its acceptance would place me in Agrippina's situation, when she says, 'Je vois croire les honneurs et tomber mon crédit.'" So much suavity, taste and wit did that most amiable as well as accomplished nobleman usually mix up with his addresses to Parliament.

He had not many imitators, for never, I believe,

were debates conducted with more asperity and personal recrimination than during the period of Pitt and Fox's contest for power. Accusations the most futile and unbecoming in their nature were preferred on both sides, with the view of rendering each other odious to the nation. Sir Richard Hill, member for Shropshire,<sup>1</sup> animadverted with some severity on the frequent attendance and marks of warm interest exhibited by the Prince of Wales while present in the Lower House. "Whatever censure may be lavished on secret influence," observed he, "corrupt influence must necessarily be pernicious. The former may produce possible benefit; the latter never can, under any circumstances. What might be the consequence if it should happen that an heir-apparent attended the debates of this assembly, and endeavoured by his looks or gestures to countenance a faction and to influence individual votes? Might not such conduct be esteemed a species of corrupt influence?" A very general cry of order, accompanied with testimonies of disapprobation, arising from various parts of the House, Lord Melbourne,<sup>2</sup> a man who never, I believe, uttered a word in his place either before or after that evening, starting up, broke silence. Occupying as he did the place of a Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, and indignant at the charge, he declared that the words spoken amounted to a direct attack on his Royal Highness, and therefore he should demand proof of the alleged fact. Sir Richard replied that "the

<sup>1</sup> He was a rigid Calvinist, and so addicted to unite low jokes with quotations from Holy Writ that he was called the "*Scriptural Killigrew*." He died in 1808.—D.

<sup>2</sup> Sir Peniston Lamb, the first Viscount Melbourne (Irish peerage). He sat for Malmesbury, and was made an English Baron, 1815. He was the father of Lord Melbourne, the Prime Minister, who at this period was five years old.—D.

prince to whom he alluded was only a supposititious personage." Lord Delaval,<sup>1</sup> on whom the Coalition Ministers had conferred an Irish peerage only a few months earlier, and who was raised to the British peerage by Pitt about two years later—a nobleman with whom I had the honour of being much acquainted, and whom I may have occasion to mention again in some part of these Memoirs—rose to remark that "the Prince of Wales acted most wisely in attending debates, for the purpose of imbibing just ideas of that constitution which must probably at some future day be placed under his protection as its natural guardian." But Hill, not at all disconcerted, calmly answered that "for such purposes as those just mentioned he could have no objection to his Royal Highness's appearance in that House." Here the conversation terminated.

The Prince, though, from deference to his father's wishes, which were signified to him, he had absented himself on the day when the East India Bill was finally rejected in the Upper House, yet did not the less retain and avow his predilection for its authors. His presence in the House of Commons among the peers, where he took his place under the gallery, might therefore be considered as indirectly encouraging to Fox and the Coalition. Frederick, Prince of Wales, his grandfather, had, however, as is well known, given the same marks of partiality to the minority which drove Sir Robert Walpole from power in the beginning of 1741, without exciting any comment or expressions of disapprobation. Pulteney, then at the head of Opposition, even alluded in one of his speeches to his consciousness

<sup>1</sup> John Hussey Delaval was created a Baronet in 1761. He represented the town of Berwick in several Parliaments, and was created an Irish peer by the title of Lord Delaval in October 1783, and advanced to the English peerage by the same title in 1786. He died in 1808, when the peerage became extinct.

of the august personage before whom he spoke. Sir Richard Hill, whom I very particularly knew, was one of the most upright, disinterested, and honest men who ever sat in Parliament. Andrew Marvel was not more incorrupt, but his religious cast of character laid him open to the shafts of ridicule. His manners were quaint and puritanical, his address shy and embarrassed. He possessed, however, a most benevolent disposition, together with a great estate, which enabled him to gratify his generous and philanthropic feelings. Sir Richard, though he attained to old age, being, I believe, seventy-five at the time of his decease, remained always unmarried. In the simplicity, singularity, and eccentricities of his character, as well as deportment, he always reminded me of Addison's Sir Roger de Coverley. The "*Rolliad*," which treats him with great severity, describes him as—

"Friend of King George, but of King Jesus more."

In the same manner the Earl of Dartmouth,<sup>1</sup> while a member of Lord North's Cabinet, being likewise known to entertain very deep sentiments of religion, had obtained from the Opposition of that time the nickname of the "*Psalm-Singer*."

The indecorous personality of debate that distinguished the Lower House during this extraordinary crisis of affairs produced scenes apparently unbecoming the assembly, and such as we would vainly expect to find in more tranquil periods of our parliamentary history. General Ross, a man of very eccentric manners, rising in his place, accused a Lord of the Bedchamber, the Earl of Galloway,<sup>2</sup> with

<sup>1</sup> This descendant of Charles I.'s "honest Will Legge" was born in 1755 and died in 1810. He was throughout life a religious and honest man.—D.

<sup>2</sup> John, seventh Earl of Galloway, K.T. He was created in 1796



endeavouring to influence his vote by allusions or direct intimations of the royal displeasure at his supporting the Coalition. Lord Galloway's brother, the Honourable Keith Stewart,<sup>1</sup> read a written denial of the assertion ; but the General persisted in maintaining the charge. He had served with great gallantry and distinction under General Eliott during the memorable siege of Gibraltar, where he commanded the troops employed on the 27th of November 1781 in the sally made from the garrison with such success, when the lines and batteries of the besiegers were destroyed. This extraordinary attack on Lord Galloway was commonly denominated "General Ross's sally." Lampoons, a weapon in the management of which the Opposition unquestionably excelled their opponents, were circulated with great assiduity and effect. In one of them Stewart was thus apostrophised :—

" Captain Keith, Captain Keith,  
Keep your tongue in your teeth,  
Lest you Bedchamber secrets betray !  
And if you want more,  
Why, my bold commodore,  
You may borrow of Lord Galloway."

Keith Stewart, who was then a captain in the royal navy, had incurred, as a professional man, some censure or reflections, perhaps very unjustly, during the war with Holland, for having allowed a homeward-bound Dutch ship of war to slip through the Downs and reach the Texel, while he was said to have been on shore at Deal. His brother, Lord Galloway, having, like Lord Sandwich, the inside of his mouth most defectively furnished for purposes of mastication, used a complete set of artificial teeth. Sir

Baron Stewart of Garlies, co. Wigtown, in the peerage of Great Britain, and died 13th November 1806.—ED.

<sup>1</sup> Admiral the Hon. Keith Stewart ; died 5th May 1795.—ED.

Richard Hill, accustomed almost always to draw his allusions or authorities from Holy Writ, endeavoured to prove that even benefits might result from secret influence by adducing the instances of Haman and of Mordecai. "The honest Israelite," he observed, "repaired privately to court and averted the danger which threatened the people of God from Haman's ambition, who being driven from the Cabinet, was finally suspended on a gibbet." I thought, however, at the time when Sir Richard pronounced this speech, that Pitt was not perfectly pleased with the comparison made between himself and Mordecai. Allusions drawn from Jewish history are rarely applicable to politics or to poetry. Even Dryden's "Absalom and Achitophel," as well as Prior's "Solomon," suffer from the choice of the subject and the personages. Dundas, when referring to Lee's very imprudent assertion, made, I think on the 12th of January, that "a charter was only a scroll of parchment with a piece of wax dangling to it," observed that it had been asked with equal reason, "What was the great harm of hanging an Attorney-General? A hanged Attorney-General was only a carcase dangling at the end of a rope." Sheridan, however, retorted on him with equal ability and severity for this extraordinary metaphor. Lord North did not scruple to accuse the Ministers with indecently canvassing for votes from one extremity of the kingdom to the other,—an imputation repeated in still stronger language by General Conway, who denominated their agents rat-catchers; but the charge was repelled by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as wholly destitute of proof. On the other hand, Rigby complained that Robinson, anticipating a speedy dissolution of Parliament as certain, had made use of Ministerial influence to effect the future election of a member for the borough of Harwich,

though he did not think proper to ground any specific motion on his complaint.

Fox, alluding to the reflections which had been thrown out by Sir Richard Hill on the Prince of Wales for attending questions under agitation in that House, exclaimed with warmth, "God forbid that royal personage should not participate in its political concerns! Where can he so well imbibe a knowledge of the principles of our constitution as within these walls? How can he better illustrate the excellence of his character than by thus blending personal respect for the King his father with attachment to his country?" Not deterred, however, by such observations from animadverting on other circumstances connected with his Royal Highness's personal appearance under the gallery, the new Treasurer of the Navy remarked hypothetically that "if the great personage in question, not content with merely listening to the debates, should on any occasion testify by his behaviour or gesticulations while in the House a predilection or partiality for any set of men, such marks of his preference would be unbecoming and might operate as a means of influence." No answer was given by any member of the Opposition to the supposed case thus stated, but Lord North, like Fox, in the course of the evening, after expatiating on the eminent virtues of the heir-apparent, expressed a becoming admiration at "his attending the House of Commons, where he might imbibe the true spirit of our constitution and become acquainted with the nature of this limited Government rather than listening to flatterers." The comments on this delicate subject proceeded no farther and were not renewed during the duration of the Parliament.

[23*d* January 1784.] The City of London led the way to the rest of the kingdom by going up at this

juncture to the foot of the throne with an address thanking his Majesty for the very interference which the House of Commons had pronounced to be subversive of the constitution. They retorted at the same time upon the authors of Fox's India Bill the charge of "raising a power unknown to this free Government, and highly inimical to its safety." Encouraged by such unequivocal demonstrations of the affection of the metropolis and of the corresponding defection in the Opposition ranks, Pitt had already framed and brought forward another East India Bill, the second reading of which took place at this time. All the faculties of the two great leaders who had originated those respective measures were exerted in its attack and its defence. Fox, after contrasting its pretended inefficiency and fluctuation of system with the vigour which characterised his own measure for the government of our Asiatic possessions, concluded by protesting, "If the present bill is adopted, the Company may continue to transmit orders to their servants; they may fill their dispatches with morals and with ethics, but all their commands will be pursued with indifference and treated with disrespect. If adopted, I do not hesitate to assert that India is lost, irrecoverably lost for ever." This most unfortunate prediction was not, however, meant so much for futurity as calculated to operate on the apprehensions of his audience.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, with more attention to the patience of the House, briefly pointed out the dangerous as well as unconstitutional nature of the power proposed by Fox to be vested in Lord Fitzwilliam, "independent of the crown, dependent on the good graces of the Ministers who could command a majority in Parliament." The division took place before midnight, when Pitt's bill was rejected only by eight votes out of 436

persons who divided. Such, indeed, was Fox's consciousness of these victories finally terminating in defeat, that no sooner had he thrown out the bill of the Minister than he moved for leave to introduce his own bill a second time, but so changed and modified in its leading principles as to be scarcely recognisable. He unquestionably perceived when too late the error into which his own ill-regulated ambition, propelled by Burke's ardent, impatient, and theoretical spirit had precipitated the party. In order, therefore, to conciliate the favour of the House and of the country to the measure, he now offered to abandon almost all its obnoxious provisions, particularly the patronage, which had excited so much obloquy and clamour. There remained only two fundamental principles or features which he declared himself unable to retract, namely, the permanency of the system for the government of India under parliamentary, not royal authority; and, secondly, that the supreme control itself should be established, not on the Ganges, but here at home.<sup>1</sup> The proposition, however, appeared to be no longer suited to the exigency. It is impossible not to accuse Fox of betraying want of judgment throughout every part of the transactions which led to his Ministerial fall. A cautious or a temperate statesman would not have furnished the sovereign to whom he was personally unacceptable with the means of precipitating him from the elevation which he had attained with so much labour. If the Coalition had made a judicious and moderate use of their power, the King, however he might have lamented his situation, could not have liberated himself from their yoke. They enabled him by their errors to emancipate himself. When we reflect that another

<sup>1</sup> This principle was adopted in Pitt's India Bill, by which the Board of Control was constituted.—ED.

Coalition, formed by Lords Grenville and Grey, uninstructed by experience, renewed and exhibited in 1807 nearly the same errors followed by the same results, it affords no common matter of astonishment.

After the rejection of the Minister's bill for the government of India, Fox, sustained by members in various parts of the House, endeavoured to force from Pitt an explicit declaration of his intentions relative to a dissolution of Parliament; but neither menaces nor expostulations could prevail over his determination to observe a profound silence on that point. He resembled a rock against which the waves dashed and spent their force. To General Conway, who accused him of attaining power by unconstitutional means and existing by corruption, he replied with great dignity, but refused to answer any interrogatories from individuals. "I will be the sole judge of my own honour," said he, "and though I have not been long accustomed to the strong language used within these walls, yet neither unsupported slander nor intemperate threats shall discompose my temper." Vainly Fox exhausted his indignation on the Minister's "sulky silence and want of decency towards the House." With as little effect Lord Surrey pledged himself, if Pitt persisted in denying the information demanded, to bring forward a motion of a compulsory or a criminating nature. Lord North and Sheridan each assailed him with every weapon of debate; while Martin, notwithstanding his avowed detestation of the Coalition, declared that on this occasion he could not support Administration, but would abandon them if the threatened resolution should be brought forward. Pitt remained immovable. It was a moment of crisis; the majority irritated, clamorous, and ripe for a vote of a violent nature. But Fox, who well knew

that any such act would only furnish a momentary triumph, followed by the destruction of his parliamentary machinery, interposed with apparent moderation. "Perhaps," observed he, "the Minister conceives that because he has insulted this House to such a point, he may proceed still farther. I am nevertheless averse to take any intemperate advantage of his conduct." He therefore proposed an adjournment of a few hours, till twelve o'clock of the same day (Saturday, the 24th of January), expressing his hope that a full attendance would then take place. His expectations were realised, for I have rarely witnessed a greater number of members than assembled on the occasion. Powis instantly rising, with marks of strong and visible emotion, reiterated Fox's question of the preceding night; but Pitt, though he no longer declined making any reply, yet was with difficulty induced to guarantee the existence of the House of Commons even for eight-and-forty hours. With that slender assurance of their duration, they nevertheless instantly adjourned.

Notwithstanding the rising indignation of the capital and of the country, which every day manifested itself with augmenting energy in favour of Administration, yet the Minister's situation at this juncture, equally painful in itself as it was without precedent in our parliamentary history, appeared to be at times not wholly exempt from personal danger. Fox might be said, without either metaphor or exaggeration, to hold suspended over his head the severest marks of the indignation of an offended House of Commons. His removal from the King's presence and councils as an enemy to his country, his impeachment or his commitment to the Tower, any or all of these propositions might probably, nay, might certainly, have been carried in moments of

effervescence, when the passions of a popular assembly, inflamed by such a conductor as Fox, seemed to be ripe for any act of violence. The irritation and impatience produced by debates, protracted or repeated night after night, rendered his followers susceptible of impressions the most hostile to the Minister, who in sullen majesty or in contumelious silence heard unmoved their clamorous denunciations seated calmly on the Treasury bench. Mr. Pitt displayed in that situation during successive weeks a combination of fortitude, self-possession, presence of mind, and ability, which I never recollect without admiration. He did not indeed manifest the suavity, amenity, and wit of Lord North or of Sheridan. But always preserving the command of himself, he was never led into deviations from caution and prudence, even when he seemed most to set at defiance the menaces of his adversaries. If we reflect on his period of life, our surprise is augmented. He constituted indeed in himself the Administration which he defended, and which, without him, could not have been maintained for a single week in existence.

It may naturally be asked why Fox, holding in his hand so powerful an engine as the majority of the House of Commons, which assembly he well knew might every day be dissolved, and the individual members composing which superiority he saw diminishing after almost every debate or division, in consequence of the natural operation of a variety of obvious causes, yet should never have let fall its vengeance on the head of the Minister whom he apparently held in his power? Why, when he saw all the ordinary expedients exhausted or ineffectual, which might compel the King to dismiss his Administration or induce the Ministry to resign, did he tamely wait till, Mr. Pitt's measures being ripe,



and the country having declared almost unanimously on his side, a dissolution reduced the Coalition to insignificance, and overwhelmed their ill-concerted schemes for perpetuating their authority? Fox wanted neither vigour, decision, nor inclination to have anticipated his own approaching fall and the extinction of his ambitious plans. Nor could he deceive himself relative to the political destruction which impended over the Coalition, if they did not prove victorious in the actual contest. How then, and on what principles of common sense, are we to explain this seeming contradiction in his conduct?

Fox possessed no absolute certainty, in the first place, whatever he might believe, that the same majority which had supported him in voting remonstrances to the throne would either stop the supplies or carry up an address for Pitt's removal. Various country gentlemen already called for a union, and declared their conviction that no Administration from which he should be excluded would be found equal to the national emergency. Even many of Fox's supporters among that class of men loudly deprecated all extremities. They might abandon him. He might therefore be left in a minority, and all his consequence as the head of a great party would thus be lost by one imprudent step. But granting, however, as seemed most probable, that he should carry a personal question against Pitt by ten, twenty, or thirty votes in a crowded House, what would be the inevitable effect of such a victory? That the King, sustained by the voice of the country, and not susceptible of fear when he believed himself to be acting right, instead of dismissing his Ministers would dissolve the Parliament, and confidently appeal to the people against their own representatives. In that case, Fox, far from attaining his object, would only have

accelerated a dissolution, and would afford to his antagonist a plausible if not a solid excuse for advising the sovereign to adopt that measure. These were unquestionably the real causes of Fox's seeming moderation. Nor did Pitt, on the other hand, want motives equally powerful in restraining him from any precipitate movement. The county members who supported him were adverse to a dissolution unless circumstances rendered it indispensable. By temporising and protracting, however irksome, and even in some degree humiliating, might be considered his situation in Parliament, he gave time for the public sentiment to be loudly as well as generally pronounced, and could avail himself of it at any moment. Such were the considerations which mutually withheld the two chiefs from proceeding to extremities, till the natural and unavoidable progress of affairs produced the final consummation.

[*26th January 1784.*] The idea of endeavouring to reconcile two men who combined in their different characters almost all the great endowments fitted for government, if it could be realised, seemed apparently pregnant, at first view, with incalculable benefit to the country. Some individuals of respectability and of large landed property, members of the House, impelled by these feelings, undertook the experiment. As early as the 20th of January the idea was suggested from various quarters in the course of debate, but neither Fox nor Pitt, though both affected to consider it as an object highly desirable, pretended to think it practicable without a sacrifice of principle. Fox fairly avowed that he entertained very little hope of seeing such a union effected as could prove a blessing to the country. The Chancellor of the Exchequer professed a similar conviction, and stated it in still plainer language.

"I am by no means averse," observed he, "to the union so strenuously and so respectably recommended, but I agree with the right honourable gentleman (Fox) that such a union, not founded on principle, would only prove fallacious, and would produce disunion in a quarter where it must be attended with worse consequences to the state than can result from our disputes in this assembly." Marsham, while he coincided in sentiment with the two preceding speakers, yet expressed his warm satisfaction at the assurances which they gave of their mutual disposition to act together for the public extrication. But Powis, with more discernment, exclaimed, "A union of abilities has been loudly called for within these walls. I rather wish to see a union of principle. The former may produce discordant counsels and feeble measures; the latter must have opposite results."

In fact, however specious the project appeared in theory, it proved impracticable, and only served to demonstrate the futility of the attempt. The St. Alban's Tavern became the scene of this parliamentary drama, to which place repaired about sixty or more members, distinguished for high character, large property, and acknowledged uprightness of intention. Though they chose Mr. Thomas Grosvenor, brother to the peer of that name, and one of the representatives for the city of Chester, as their nominal chairman, their deliberations and proceedings were chiefly influenced and directed by two gentlemen who had already on various occasions powerfully affected the debates carried on within the walls of the House. The first, Charles Marsham, son and heir of Lord Romney, himself member for Kent, though a man by no means prepossessing or engaging in his manners, which were to the last degree coarse and inelegant, yet wanted not ability,

and attracted deservedly general consideration in his parliamentary capacity. The other, Powis, whom I have had so often occasion to mention, and who commonly prefaced his speeches, on occasions of great interest, by a copious discharge of tears, which he seemed to command at will, challenged attention from his recognised integrity, eloquence, energy of mind, and impartiality.

The Duke of Portland, as nominal head of one party, and Pitt, as leader of the other, affected equally to receive with deference the propositions made to each on the part of the associated members. It is probable, however, that the Duke in this profession might be more sincere than the Minister. I thought so at the time, and, after the lapse of near forty years, I am confirmed in that opinion. Difficulties and objections either to a personal interview or to a negotiation were started in turn by both parties. Pitt refusing to resign, or even to hear of a virtual resignation, which was required of him as a previous step to any conference for the purpose of forming an extended Administration, the overtures became suspended, and were finally broken off in consequence of these preliminary impediments. But the patriotic zeal of the St. Alban's meeting was not to be overcome by ordinary obstacles, and they returned to the charge some time afterwards, apparently under more propitious auspices. In compliance with their suggestion and wishes, the King himself was even induced, towards the end of the month of February, to send a message to the Duke of Portland recommending a conference between him and Pitt, with a view to constitute a Ministry on "a wide basis and on fair and equal terms." Instead of instantly closing with such a proposition, from which neither the sovereign nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer (whatever might have been their

secret wishes) could easily recede without incurring the imputation of deliberate insincerity, the Duke of Portland and Fox thought proper to cavil about the acceptation of the term "equal." At this opening, with which they injudiciously furnished him, Pitt escaped by refusing to define any expressions before the proposed interview. It was by a similar line of conduct in framing obstacles when they should have accepted office that Lords Grey and Grenville, after Perceval's assassination in 1812, lost the reins of Government which were tendered to them by the Regent.

All further efforts were therefore ultimately abandoned with a view to produce a political union between two men whose mutual animosity and rivalry seemed to derive new force from the unsuccessful attempts made to effect a reconciliation. With whatever complacency and ostensible alacrity Pitt invariably received the propositions for such a junction, it is difficult to persuade ourselves that he could cordially desire their accomplishment. He beheld the prize for which they were contending nearly attained and secured. His insatiable ambition impelled him to govern alone, without an equal and a coadjutor in the Cabinet of such energy as Fox. Even their recriminations in Parliament, which had been so acrimonious and so recent, seemed hardly to admit of being buried in instant oblivion without a mutual sacrifice of principle. We are warranted therefore in believing that an accommodation, forced on both by imperious circumstances, would have proved hollow, insincere, and of short duration. They appeared to be not formed for acting together as members of the same Administration; nor did they ever openly coalesce for an instant during their whole remaining lives, though in 1804, on Addington's resignation, Pitt affected to

desire and to recommend Fox's introduction to the Cabinet. The French Revolution itself, which successively brought over to Government, as to an asylum against the evils of a sanguinary anarchical republic, so many other eminent individuals, at whose head were the Duke of Portland, Burke, and Windham, could never induce Fox to quit the Opposition bench. He remained fixed there above two-and-twenty years, till death liberated him from his antagonist; and he then only became a Minister when, perhaps unfortunately for his country, his own career drew to its close.

During the debate of the 26th of January, in answer to the charges brought against him by Fox, who called on him to resign his unconstitutional power as a necessary preliminary to any union, the new First Minister replied with equal dignity and force of expression. He seemed, indeed, to feel not the slightest apprehension from the indignation or from the votes of his antagonist's majority. "I came into office," observed he, "to fulfil the duty which I owe his Majesty, whose confidence I have not forfeited by any experiment for introducing a new power or estate into the constitution."—"I consider myself as aggrieved, since, wholly untried in my Ministerial capacity, I lie under the censure of a resolution of this House; but I have at least the consolation to reflect, that in proportion as the present Cabinet becomes more known, its members rise in the confidence and esteem of Parliament, as well as of the people. I may appeal for the truth of my assertion to the decaying majorities of the Opposition. Not that I am inimical to a reconciliation or a union which has been so strongly recommended, but, in order to accomplish this object, all personal views or prejudices, all pride and punctilio, must be laid aside. The right honourable gentleman has

insisted on the entire resignation of the present Ministers previous to any negotiation. But though I occupy an employment of eminence, it is not one of choice ; and I trust, whenever the occasion calls for it, I shall approve myself neither tenacious of power nor improperly attached to office. I act from patriotic, not private views ; but my sense of public duty compels me to retain my actual situation till another arrangement can be formed, and not to suffer this great country to be again plunged into a state of anarchy, accompanied with the absence of all government, as we experienced on a recent occasion." The inflexibility and determination manifested in this speech left little rational prospect of any accommodation.

[2d—10th February 1748.] The discussions which took place in the House of Commons between the termination of January and the middle of the ensuing month, though equally violent and acrimonious with the preceding debates, contained less matter of interest or of novelty. Accusations levelled against the East India Bill from the Treasury bench, or against secret influence from the opposite side, began to weary their hearers, and made little impression. Fox continued, it is true, master of the deliberations of the Lower House of Parliament, his majorities sometimes falling as low as nineteen, and at other times rising to thirty-one ; but this precarious superiority was far overbalanced by his decline in the popular esteem. No eloquence nor any exertions of sophistry could reconcile the public to his union with Lord North, followed immediately by the introduction of a measure obviously calculated to cement their political power at the expense of the crown, which it must have reduced to a state of insignificance or vassalage. During the course of the debate which arose on the 2d of

February, when Mr. Grosvenor moved that "an extended and united Administration was necessary for the extrication of the country from its distracted state," great difference of opinion respecting its eligibility was exhibited among the members of the assembly. Powis, whose sentiments upon every point inspired great respect, declared that "a general coalition was now become a matter not of choice but of necessity." "No man," added he, "can any longer oppose it without voting in effect that the national business shall be suspended, which must produce general ruin." Widely different was the view of things taken by Sir Cecil Wray, who, however inferior to Powis in ability, yet, as being Fox's colleague for Westminster, and possessing plain common sense, was heard with much attention. "I cannot," said he, "consistently with my duty or my principles contribute by my vote to replace in Cabinet the very individuals who by their late daring invasion of the rights and properties of their fellow-subjects have been so justly dismissed by his Majesty, and some of whom ought to have been brought to the block."—"As to the distractions in the state which are mentioned in the motion, I know of none, nor do I believe in their existence. On the contrary, the people seem to be nearly of one opinion respecting the present Ministers and those recently in power. The former are generally regarded as honest and virtuous, while the others are thought to have justly forfeited their employments for having attacked the most sacred privileges of their fellow-citizens. There are hardly two opinions on the subject without doors. This House, indeed, has declared that it has no confidence in the Administration; but the addresses which are daily pouring in from different parts of the kingdom prove how much the public confide in them. The



unavoidable inference is, that the voice of the House of Commons is no longer the voice of the people of England."

Fox in his reply treated the addresses to which Sir Cecil had alluded with great contumely, not foreseeing how rapidly they would spread over the whole surface of the country. Of Westminster and of Middlesex he spoke as portions of England inaccessible to Ministerial artifice or delusion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer having assented to Mr. Grosvenor's motion, Coke, member for Norfolk, immediately proposed that "the continuance of the present Ministers in power is an obstacle to an extended and united Administration;" Fox thus conducting his majority forward from step to step till he should carry them to the intended consummation. On this mode of parliamentary proceeding Pitt commented with much severity and justice of animadversion. "The House," observed he, "has been insidiously led on from one resolution to another, without ever discussing any single proposition on its own proper merits. The first resolutions were voted at six in the morning, a most unusual hour, with scarcely any debate or discussion. The second grew out of the former, and were followed by the third. But how had they been discussed? As mere corollaries to the preceding propositions, which this assembly was bound in consistency to adopt as a matter of course. Thus artfully have we been kept from forming a fair estimate of the questions submitted to us." Having endeavoured to point out the contradictions in which Powis involved himself by voting for the resolutions, though he opposed and disapproved them, though he admitted that "they were hastily proposed, grounded on doubtful or unauthenticated premises, and held out unfair conclusions," Pitt adverted to other parts of that member's speech.

"He does not wish me," added the Minister, "to quit the fortress, as he denominates it, that I occupy, and to march out with a halter about my neck. Sir, the only fortress that I recognise, or ever desire to defend, is the fortress of the constitution. For its preservation I will resist every attack and every seduction. With what regard, indeed, either to my own personal honour or to public principle, can I change my armour and meanly beg to be received as a volunteer among the forces of the enemy? This is a humiliation to which I never will condescend."—"I am, nevertheless, disposed to facilitate, as far as my principles will allow me, the union so much desired. But I see no reason for the previous resignation of Ministers, and never will consent to it. If the House think otherwise, there are constitutional means open to them, either by impeachment for our crimes, if we have committed any, or by addressing the crown for our removal." Mr. Coke's motion passed by a majority of nineteen in a very crowded house, where 427 members were present.

Notwithstanding this apparent triumph of the Coalition, their cause declined in the public estimation from day to day. Neither the powerful eloquence of Fox, the sallies of wit which illuminated every speech of Lord North, nor the happy mixture of humour, argument, and satire which characterised the efforts of Sheridan, could rescue the party from the imputation of having made mutual sacrifices of principle. During the debate of the subsequent evening, the 3d of February, Sheridan even avowed without circumlocution that when Fox first communicated to him the proposition of coalescing with his ancient adversary, he advised his right honourable friend by no means to accede to it, as the insurmountable prejudices imbibed throughout the

nation would infallibly produce the loss of his popularity, character, and general estimation. Sheridan added, indeed, that on maturely weighing the motives of state necessity by which it was dictated, when sustained by his experience of the honour, principles, and steadiness of Lord North, he rejoiced at the union which had taken place, even in contradiction to his own advice. But it is evident from this disclosure of his sentiments that he reasoned more dispassionately than Fox, who, seduced by his ambition, goaded by his wants, and beholding only the numerical ascendant which Lord North's junction would give him in one if not in both Houses of Parliament, imagined that he could coerce the sovereign, and might either persuade, delude, or despise the people. The event fully justified Sheridan's opinion, and manifested the superiority of his judgment, since even though we should admit that Lord Shelburne would inevitably have remained in power if the Coalition had not taken place, yet Fox must have occupied the most imposing situation as a public man, placed at the head of the Rockingham party in the House of Commons, and could not probably have been long excluded from a participation in the councils of the crown, even by Pitt himself.

In vain did Sheridan, with admirable wit, endeavour to show that an equal sacrifice of former political principles had taken place on the Ministerial side of the House with the change exhibited among his friends—an assertion which he attempted to illustrate by the spectacle which the Treasury bench presented, where the principal individuals now seated side by side were recently acting in determined hostility. But the union of inferior or subordinate persons did not excite sentiments of equal repugnance nor awaken such strong condemnation as the coalition of two principals, the one of whom

had, during successive years, been loaded by the other with the severest imputations, and denounced as a just object of national vengeance. In vain did Fox accuse the First Minister, "after assassinating the constitution by secret influence in one House of Parliament, with having recourse to methods of the basest corruption in order to procure a majority in another." As vainly did Rigby reproach Pitt with lavishing peerages for the same purpose; while it was notorious that the late Administration was debarred from conferring similar dignities, and had not been able to create even a single British peer. With as little effect did Marsham read the resolutions adopted by the meeting at the St. Alban's Tavern, affirming "that any Administration founded on the total exclusion of the members of the last or of the present Ministry would be inadequate to the public exigencies;" while Powis urged the Chancellor of the Exchequer to resign, as a necessary preliminary to all conciliation. Pitt, though he still professed to desire a union, "provided it could be effected without a sacrifice of principle or of honour," yet not only refused previously to retire from office, but started many ulterior impediments to the accomplishment of the object itself.

No symptoms of approximation between the contending parties beyond unmeaning professions of mutual disposition to bury in oblivion past animosities took place, and among their respective adherents a spirit of inveterate enmity was exhibited. Lord Mulgrave, in one of his speeches, charged Fox with "trampling the House of Brunswick under foot" by his East India Bill, and though called to order by the late Secretary of State, inveighed against him as "a plunderer and an invader." Governor Johnstone said that "if an election for a king were to take place in this country, Mr. Fox

should have his vote, so high an opinion did he entertain of those transcendent abilities which that individual possessed; but wishing to preserve the constitution, he had negatived a bill which would have placed its author above all control." "His talents," added Johnstone, "I admit to be pre-eminent; so were those of Julius Cæsar, who undid Rome. Oliver Cromwell, who made the House of Commons his instrument, overturned the constitution. Such would have been the effect of the East India Bill if it had passed the Legislature. Nor is the continuance of the present Minister in office less necessary in order to prevent the renewal of that measure than was his original acceptance of employment to defeat it in the first instance." Wilberforce declared that "even if the obnoxious bill had passed the House of Peers by as great a majority as it did the Lower House, yet he should equally have thanked the Crown for dismissing the late Ministers." Pitt himself, treating with defiance as well as with contempt Fox's indirect attempts to force his resignation, called on his antagonist to come boldly forward, and either to criminate his conduct as a Minister or to move a personal question for his removal from office. Professing his own purity, both as a man and as a public functionary, he avowed his indifference for all the clamour of party or the unfounded imputations brought against the mode of his attaining power, and concluded by trusting that the House would do justice to the motives which actuated his present line of conduct.

[11th—17th February 1784.] Burke by no means took the same active or conspicuous part in the debates that followed the rejection of the East India Bill as he had exhibited while the measure was on its progress to the Upper House. With the loss of the Pay Office he seemed to have lost for a time

much of his energy of mind. Even Lord North scarcely occupied the second place in these parliamentary convulsions, where Sheridan and Erskine, Powis, and even Marsham, severally attracted almost as much attention as the late First Minister. His blue ribband, beheld among the greatcoats, buff waistcoats, and dirty boots of his new allies, involuntarily recalled the reflection of his having given the law from the Treasury bench during twelve years to the same assembly in which he now performed so humiliating and inferior a character. He bore, nevertheless, this political change, under which many men would have sunk, with that imperturbable serenity and equality of temper which ever distinguished him through life. He acquired even the applauses of every party by the manly and cheerful promptitude which he showed to sacrifice all personal objects or interests to the preservation of public tranquillity. When Pitt avowed that however highly he might respect that nobleman's abilities or esteem his private character, yet they could never sit together in the same Cabinet, Lord North, while he loudly censured the contemptuous dignity and unaccommodating spirit of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, nevertheless declared that no considerations relative to himself should for an instant impede the formation of a new Ministry consonant to the general wishes of the country.

"There may be individuals," observed Pitt, "against whom I entertain no personal dislike or ill-will, whose private character I even respect and revere, whose abilities are great, and yet with whom I could never bring myself to sit or to act in the Cabinet." No reply could be more dignified yet disinterested than that of Lord North. "It is impossible for me to avoid perceiving," said he, "that I am the person to whom allusion is made. From

whatever quarter, however, such expressions may come, and with whatever form of words they may be clothed, I will never quit my situation or be driven from the ground which I occupy in this country to gratify the caprice or the prejudices of any man, whatever may be his position in the state or his opinion of himself. But in the present distracted condition of the country, produced by the means which the Chancellor of the Exchequer has used for obtaining power, I find that the national voice demands my retirement, or that public opinion regards me as an obstacle to that extended and united Administration so anxiously required, God forbid that I should impede the consummation of such a salutary union! No love of power or emolument, no object of ambition, shall induce me for a single day to form a bar to the completion of that great object." This declaration elicited the warmest expressions of admiration from Marsham and Powis, eulogiums the more noticed as no individuals in the House had treated him with greater acrimony when First Lord of the Treasury during the latter part of the American war. Powis, after panegyrising Lord North's virtues, subjoined, "For my own part, I am not among the number of those persons who would wish to exclude the noble Lord from any place in a future Administration, but since he has so disinterestedly expressed his readiness to sacrifice his own prospects to the general tranquillity and benefit, the fault will henceforth lie with the Minister, if he should still refuse to pay to the House of Commons the deference due to a branch of the Legislature."

Lord North found himself at this time unable to prevent the borough of Banbury, for which place he sat in Parliament, and where his family had always possessed a decided influence, from joining in the general cry against the Coalition: they even drew

up an address thanking his Majesty for the recent dismission from office of their actual representative in the House of Commons. A delegation from the inhabitants of Banbury waited on me in London, bringing with them the address itself, accompanied by a request that I would present it to the King on the first levée day at St. James's; but, on full consideration, I declined taking such a personal part against a nobleman whom I greatly respected, loved, and honoured, though I had withdrawn from the party with which he had connected himself. Lord North, alluding afterwards, during the debate which took place on the 27th of February, to this address, declared that "he had the consolation to know it was not signed by one of those individuals, his constituents, who returned him to Parliament." It spoke, nevertheless, the sentiments of a large and respectable portion of the inhabitants and householders of the place.

[18th and 19th February 1784.] No circumstance could more forcibly demonstrate the little apprehension felt by Pitt of the effects of parliamentary indignation, or could more strongly prove the confidence with which his own popularity inspired him, than his conduct at this juncture. Almost immediately after the extinction of the fallacious expectations awakened by the St. Alban's Tavern resolutions, rising in his place, he calmly acquainted the House that "the King, notwithstanding their recommendations, had not thought proper to dismiss his Ministers, and that they had not resigned." Such a piece of information, so delivered, seemed meant to force the Coalition on some measure of violence. Fox, nevertheless, while he did not affect to conceal his indignation at the affront offered to the legislative body, and at the defiance conveyed in the Minister's words, yet knew too well the feeble



state of the complicated machine over which he presided to press heavily upon its springs. He reprobated, indeed, the treatment which the House experienced, a treatment demanding, he said, exemplary punishment. But he concluded with only proposing an adjournment of eight-and-forty hours, in order to give the Minister time for reflection. This motion, so distinguished by involuntary forbearance, he carried by twelve; a very slender superiority where above 400 members divided.

Fox, on this occasion, though he pretended to deprecate any intemperate step, and only demanded a respite of one or two days, exclaiming with the Carthaginian queen, while he accommodated her complaints to his own feelings—

*“Tempus inane peto ; spatium requiemque furori,”*

yet endeavoured, by a most able and laboured appeal to the wounded pride of the House, to inflame their passions, while he directed their resentment against the Minister. Powis highly approved and supported the motion, which, he said, was in itself moderate, forbearing, and the only proper course adapted to the extraordinary circumstances of the country, as it allowed breathing time, while a compromise, he hoped, might yet be effectuated. But there were other independent members of the House who held a different language. Sir William Lemon, one of the representatives for the county of Cornwall, declared that he wished not for any union on the principles laid down by Fox. “I never liked,” said he, “any of the resolutions adopted by this assembly, of which the present Ministers are the object. I consider them as arbitrary, violent, and personal. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has already made every concession compatible with his private honour and his official situation. Those

two great component parts of his present existence must stand or fall together. I am happy that he has displayed so much firmness in so good a cause, and I trust he will not stoop to any unbecoming negotiation."

Thus sustained from without as well as from within, Pitt not only displayed the most determined resolution, but charged Fox and his adherents with systematically withholding the supplies, thus sacrificing their country, as he asserted, to private faction, enmity, or ambition. A distinction was however drawn by the Opposition between withholding the supplies and only postponing them, which latter line of conduct Powis, in moderate language, and Marsham, with much stronger asseveration, declared to constitute their sole intention. The last-mentioned member recriminated with asperity on the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as expecting from the House the same servile submission in registering the Ministerial edicts which the French sovereigns exacted in the assemblies denominated parliaments. With more ability, Fox attempted to make a compromise with the Minister, offering instantly to vote the supplies provided that the House might receive assurances from him that "his Majesty would comply with the desires of his faithful Commons." But Pitt, after first declaring the convictions of "his personal honour being inseparably connected with his present official situation, and his determination never to resign as a prelude to negotiation,"—in other words, to leave his place, and then to treat with the Opposition in order to form part of a new Administration,—peremptorily refused to barter office for supply, or to enter into any stipulation on the subject. From this resolution, expressed in laconic but energetic terms, neither menaces, blandishments, nor expostulations could

induce him to recede ; and after a prolonged debate of two successive days, Fox, as the master of the assembly, finally moved to adjourn the sitting on the state of the nation, which was carried without a division. He still remained all-powerful within those walls, but Pitt's superiority lay without doors, in every county, town, and village.

Already addresses crowded in, from London down to Old Sarum, a borough which, though consisting only of one solitary farmhouse, yet, as belonging to Lord Camelford, who had just been elevated to the peerage, did not omit to offer its tribute of loyalty to the crown and of abhorrence for the measures of the Opposition. Middlesex, Southwark, even Westminster, abandoning Fox, approached the throne with congratulations, or with testimonies of approbation at the dismissal of the late Ministers. York, a city where the Cavendish interest had always been predominant, and which place the late Chancellor of the Exchequer actually represented in Parliament—Edinburgh, Worcester, Exeter, besides many other inferior towns, followed the example, which spread with rapidity throughout the whole island. When we reflect on these facts, we shall probably think that Mr. Pitt, whatever professions he might either make himself, or whatever wishes for “a united and extended Administration” he might judge proper to put into his royal master's mouth in reply to the addresses of the House of Commons, yet could have nourished no serious intentions of dividing his power with Fox.

Among the persons of rank who acted a conspicuous part, and manifested more than ordinary enthusiasm in the cause of Pitt at this time, were two well-known noblemen, Lord Mahon and Lord Mountmorres.<sup>1</sup> I have already made mention of

<sup>1</sup> Charles, Lord Mahon, afterwards third Earl of Stanhope, was

the former, whose eccentricities of dress, character, and deportment, however great they might be, were nevertheless allied to extraordinary powers of elocution as well as energies of mind. My acquaintance with him was slight, but during many years I lived in habits of familiar and frequent intercourse with Lord Mountmorres. In his person he was tall, slender, of a dark and adust complexion, active, and always on his feet, to so great a degree as to convey an idea of ubiquity personified, for he seemed to be in many places at the same time. Invariably busy, yet never attaining his object; unsuccessful in love, in ambition, in every pursuit, yet still continuing the chase; an orator in print, but destitute of eloquence, and printing speeches which he had never pronounced; fluent and plausible in conversation, though wanting judgment; abandoning his hereditary seat in the Irish House of Peers, where he might have been useful to his country, he made London his residence, sustained by the fallacious hope of acquiring a place in the English House of Commons, which he never accomplished; an enthusiast in politics, he was not the less an economist in his expenses, and though ardent in his views, always keeping his purse close shut; perpetually planning marriages, but never succeeding in them, he finally died without entering into that state;—such was Lord Mountmorres, to whom the authors of the “*Rolliad*” have assigned two “*Probationary Odes*,”

born in 1753, succeeded his father in 1786, and died in 1816. His first wife was Pitt's sister, Hester. In 1781, however, he married Louisa Grenville, daughter of the Governor of Barbadoes. The Lord Mountmorres of the text was Hervey Redmond Morres, second Viscount, who in 1797 alienated the paternal estates from the next heirs-male to his sisters. His half-brother, Francis, succeeded to the title, and having lost substantial dignity by the loss of the paternal acres, dropt therewith the old family name of Morres, and assumed that of Montmorency, in memory of descent from the grand-butler of France of that name.—D.

while to all the other individuals selected for ridicule, among whom I hold my place, they have only attributed one production of that kind. On the hustings, whether erected in Covent Garden, in Palace Yard, or in Westminster Hall, both the above-mentioned noblemen were constantly found, as in their proper element, and Fox had not in the whole range of the metropolis two more determined enemies. Lord Mahon was, however, in all senses the more formidable, pertinacious, able, and respectable.

As the tide of popular indignation rose against the East India Bill, tumultuary meetings took place in many parts of the kingdom, where the general sense of the inhabitants was collected. Westminster itself, which, during the last years of Lord North's unfortunate Administration, had constituted the citadel and the sanctuary of Fox, renouncing its voluntary allegiance, raised the standard against him. He vainly maintained, both by himself and through his adherents in Parliament, particularly Erskine, that this painful change originated solely in delusion or imposture, as if it required a superior intelligence to appreciate the objects of that measure, or as if Pitt, like the magician in the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," could transform beef and mutton into the appearance of human flesh. Lord North, alluding to one of these assemblages of people in Westminster Hall which had very recently taken place, and at which Fox was necessarily present—I think it happened in the course of the debate of the 18th of February—gave a most picturesque and ludicrous description of the scene, as well as of the principal performers. "Much," observed that facetious nobleman, "has been advanced relative to the pretended popularity of the present Minister. From what source does he derive such nostrums? Is it

from the meeting held a few days ago in Westminster Hall? One description of citizens there vociferated, 'No Coalition;' while others exclaimed, 'No back-stairs influence.' But it demanded the utmost precision of ear to decide which of the two clamours predominated. Indeed, the noise owed its origin, as I am assured, not so much to the multitude, as to two noble Lords who were there present. The first (Lord Mahon), by his nervous, impassioned gesticulation and sonorous oratory, is well calculated to carry away the prize in such a contest. The disinterested eloquence of the other peer (Lord Mountmorres) claims peculiar respect. Not influenced by British property, he has magnanimously exposed his person in a voyage to this island, and has hazarded the perils of the sea. Professing himself a citizen of the world, an advocate for the universal rights of mankind, he has abandoned his native country. He has even left its freedom in jeopardy in order that he may devote his whole faculties to the interests and preservation of this nation. From the operation and influence of such exalted characters on the public mind we cannot reason with safety."

Masterly as this piece of historic oratory must be esteemed, and powerful as was its operation on the muscles of the audience when pronounced, Lord Mahon, two days afterwards, during the discussion of the 20th February, retaliated with great severity, not unaccompanied with ability, on his political adversaries. After enumerating the unequivocal proofs of unpopularity which Fox received at the meeting alluded to by Lord North, "Does he," exclaimed Lord Mahon, "interpret groans into applause, and take hisses for approbation? There was a time when he was heard like an oracle. Why? Because the public credulously believed

that he was fighting their battles as a sincere and honest tribune of the people. But their eyes are opened since he has attempted to raise himself above the free constitution of his country by aspiring to the place of a dictator. How was their zeal expressed? In pretty intelligible words. No Grand Mogul. No India tyrant! No usurper! No turn-coat! No Catiline! If such be the popularity to which he aspires, and if such are the marks of approbation of which he boasts, long may he continue to receive them!" Even Pitt, in the course of the same evening, had recourse to similar illustrations of the decline of Fox's influence over his constituents, who once idolised him. Having stated the defeat of the Coalition at Reading, he next adverted to their discomfiture at Hackney, where the freeholders of Middlesex had been convened. Fixing his eyes on George Byng, one of the members for that county, "I see over against me," observed he, "a most determined chieftain just returned from that field of warfare, whose brow, indeed, is no longer, as formerly, adorned with the smiles of victory. Whether at Westminster it is a proof of triumph that the people would not even hear the right honourable gentleman (Fox) who once could charm the multitude into mute attention—whether he, emphatically denominated the man and the champion of the people, is now content with the execration of those multitudes whom he so long held in voluntary bonds of attachment and homage—these are points on which I will not decide; but sure I am that if Westminster constitutes his only proof, the voice of the people is no longer with him." Fox, though little accustomed to allow such speeches to remain unnoticed, did not offer any reply either to Pitt or to Lord Mahon. We may, however, form some idea from the scenes portrayed within the walls of

the House of Commons how great was the ferment which then pervaded the metropolis and the kingdom.

[*4th—16th February 1784.*] The House of Peers, which assembly, after arresting the progress of the East India Bill, as if exhausted by that effort, had ever since remained silent and supine spectators of the contest carrying on between the crown and the Commons, exhibited some symptoms of animation about this time by adopting early in the month of February two propositions of a nature tending to condemn the conduct of the Lower House, and to strengthen the hands of the sovereign. The Earl of Effingham, who during many years of his life had manifested the most decided hostility to the King's Government, and who as late as June 1780 was unjustly accused of personally mixing in the riots of the capital, now appeared as the zealous defender of prerogative. He was sustained by the Duke of Richmond, whose political character and opinions had undergone since 1782 a similar transformation; while, on the other hand, the resolutions moved by Lord Effingham found the warmest opponents in the Earl of Mansfield, in Lord Stormont, and Lord Loughborough, so long the systematic champions of royalty.

Few debates more animated, as well as acrimonious and personal, have ever taken place within the walls of the Upper House than occurred on this occasion. Lord Fitzwilliam drew the most unfavourable portrait of the young First Lord of the Treasury, whom he described as deficient not only in experience, and averse to every social source of information, but as devoured by an overweening and insatiable thirst of power. The Duke of Richmond, on the other hand, panegyricised his industry, his abstention from dissipation, his application to public



business, his frugality of the national treasure and elevation of mind, the last of which qualities had been so conspicuously displayed in his recent renunciation of a lucrative sinecure place. Lord Stormont endeavoured to point the general indignation against him for his presumption in continuing to retain his situation in defiance of the votes and resolutions of the House of Commons, while his predecessors in office, Sir Robert Walpole, Lord North, and the Earl of Shelburne, had each in turn anticipated or respectfully obeyed the first demonstrations of the pleasure of that branch of the Legislature. The Earl of Mansfield, with the political timidity so characteristic of his whole life in every situation, judicial or parliamentary, deprecated as the greatest of national calamities any resolution which, by interrupting the harmony subsisting between the two Houses, might lead to a dissolution. He seemed to contemplate such an event, if it should take place, as commensurate with the destruction of the British constitution itself, as disbanding the army, laying up the navy, suspending the functions of Government, and throwing the country into irremediable confusion. The House, neither deterred nor intimidated by these denunciations, voted the resolutions by a large majority of forty-seven. An address to the throne followed, expressive of their reliance on his Majesty's wisdom in the selection of his confidential servants, as well as the assurances of their support in the just exercise of those prerogatives intrusted to him for the protection of his people. It was difficult to imagine a triumph more decisive over the Coalition or a more opportune and important accession of strength to the First Minister struggling against a majority in the House of Commons. The King received and replied to the address of the peers in laconic but warm and affectionate language.

In other periods of our history such an interference, followed by such a censure, might, and unquestionably would, have called forth the resentment of the representatives of the people. But as Fox justly dreaded all occasions of rupture or of dispute between the two Houses which might afford the new Ministers a plausible pretence for the dissolution of Parliament, he contented himself with dictating and carrying six counter-resolutions, tending to justify the line of conduct that had been adopted by the House of Commons. Lord Beauchamp<sup>1</sup> was selected for the performance of this service; and after a series of debates, which occupied eleven days, distinguished throughout by the same asperity as had been exhibited in every preceding discussion, the resolutions finally passed without a division. In the progress of these gladiatorial exhibitions of parliamentary ability and dexterity—for such they could only be deemed—Fox, conscious that the conflict in which he had engaged wore, from day to day, a more sinister appearance, and must, however it might be protracted, terminate in his fall, assumed every shape, and tried every means of inducing his adversary to propose or to accept some principles of accommodation. At one time denouncing the First Lord of the Treasury, Fox held him up to national execration as a conspirator, who aimed at the life of the House of Commons, which assembly he at the same time daily insulted by appearing among them as a confidential servant of the crown, though destitute of their confidence or support. Changing altogether his tone a few days afterwards, in soothing accents, calculated to win their way into the heart, he complimented Pitt's abilities, professed respect for his

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Marquis of Hertford.—ED.

political principles, and expressed his readiness, nay, his eagerness, to form a union, provided it was grounded, not on private interest or aggrandisement, but on great public meritorious motives of action. He apologised for any harsh or unguarded expressions which might have occurred in the warmth of debate, avowed his ambition and love of glory as sentiments which he felt in common with the First Lord of the Treasury, and finished by protesting that he would make every personal sacrifice at the shrine of his country.

In further corroboration of these conciliating dispositions, Fox took occasion to declare that he was ready to accommodate and modify his obnoxious bill for the government of India in such manner as to meet the public wish and to acquire the public confidence. He would abandon the patronage which it conferred, and would submit every clause or regulation of the measure itself to the discussion of Parliament. His noble friend, Lord North, would prove no obstacle to union between the two parties. There remained only one stipulation from which he could never recede, namely, Mr. Pitt's virtual resignation, as being indispensable in itself, and as an expiation to the violated constitution of Great Britain. In reply to these alternate menaces and blandishments, the Minister, on his part, affected and professed an equal desire of union on bases of principle and honour, disclaimed all personal views in the line of conduct which he had adopted by his acceptance of office, and declared that he should ever think he had performed an essential service to his country by defeating a measure big with destruction to the constitution, expressing his consolation at finding that Fox was disposed to renounce any of its pernicious features. He protested that he and his colleagues were all ready to resign their

employments as soon as a prospect presented itself of forming an Administration by which the state might be effectually served ; but he took care to conclude by declaring that he could neither reconcile it to the duty which he owed his sovereign and the people of England nor to his own honour to lay down his office before he beheld such a prospect. It was evident that, amidst these reciprocal professions and demonstrations, not the smallest advance was made on either side towards real approximation.

[*20th February 1784.*] However decidedly the sentiments of the capital and of the nation had been already pronounced in favour of the new Ministers, yet Fox still retained firm possession of the House of Commons, though he held that assembly, as he well knew, only by a frail and decaying tenure. Powis, who, notwithstanding his avowed disapprobation of the East India Bill, and his invincible repugnance to the Coalition, did not the less condemn and oppose the formation of the new Administration as wholly subversive of the dignity and inherent rights of the Lower House of Parliament, rising in his place, originated another effort for compelling the King to dismiss the First Lord of the Treasury. A most animated, long, and acrimonious debate ensued, terminating in favour of Opposition at a very late hour of the morning, after two divisions, both which Fox carried, the first by a majority of twenty, the last by twenty-one. The address voted was ordered to be presented by the whole House. But this triumph, however apparently gratifying, might be considered rather as nominal than real, not extending, in fact, beyond the threshold of the lobby, and being neither calculated to intimidate the sovereign nor to accelerate the First Minister's resignation.

Lord Nugent,<sup>1</sup> who might even with more propriety than Welbore Ellis be denominated the Nestor of the House of Commons at the period of which I am writing, and who manifested all the garrulity of old age sustained by a sort of unblushing facility of utterance which might pass for a species of eloquence, took a prominent and an extraordinary part in the discussion. Though closely connected with Earl Temple,<sup>2</sup> to whom he had married his daughter, the heiress of his fortune, yet he professed ardently to wish a reconciliation and a union between the two rival statesmen. As an encouragement to attempt so great a national object, he stated that he had accomplished, more than thirty years before, a similar undertaking by means of a personal interview between Lord Granville and Mr. Pelham, which took place at his own residence in London. "These two candidates for power," said Lord Nugent, "came to the appointment disguised. I introduced them to each other, and then left them alone. A good supper and excellent wine, which I had provided, soon banished mutual reserve. They spoke freely, became friends, and so remained. Thus was this coalition effected in a single night. I am not much acquainted with the two gentlemen now sitting opposite each other, but if they will meet at my house, they shall have a delicate supper with the finest wines. They may even, if they please, get gloriously drunk. And I will answer for it, over the bottle their punctilios and distrust will vanish, while confidence will spring up where diffidence previously existed." This proposition, which seemed rather adapted to a private convivial party than becoming a legislative assembly, excited no remark

<sup>1</sup> See Vol. i. p. 88 (note).

<sup>2</sup> Afterwards Marquis of Buckingham. The ducal title of the family dates only from 1822.—ED.

from any quarter, and was excused on account of the age, sustained by the bold peculiarities of the noble person with whom it originated. Pitt and Fox could not have been reconciled or made to act together like Mr. Pelham and Lord Granville. The men and the times were both equally different.

I have never witnessed greater oratorical exertions made by Fox than on that evening. In a speech which, notwithstanding its ability, might be said to try the patience of the House by its excessive length, he endeavoured to concentrate every argument and to exhaust every topic of declamation. But his antagonist, elevated by the victories obtained without doors in various towns and counties, as well as nearer home at Hackney, where the freeholders of Middlesex had been convened, and above all in Westminster itself, where Fox had just received the most unequivocal marks of the disapprobation, or rather indignation, of his own constituents; elated by his consciousness of these advantages, Pitt, with far more brevity, but in a higher tone than he had ever yet assumed, retorted on his adversary with inconceivable severity. After exposing to derision the inconsistency of his present conduct in becoming the champion of a small majority of the House of Commons, instead of constituting the distinguished organ of the popular voice as he once was, and complimenting him on the dexterity with which he supported in turn the most opposite political characters, Pitt justified himself from the charge of imposture in representing to the nation the pernicious consequences to the British constitution that must have resulted from the East India Bill. His expressions—I mean Pitt's—were dipped in gall, though arrayed in all the elegance of language. "The right honourable gentleman," observed the Minister, "has this evening appeared

in a character entirely new, but which he supports, as indeed he does all his parts, with wonderful ability. He is to-night the champion of a small majority of this House against the loud and decided voice of the people. He has even endeavoured, in this his new character, to calumniate the English people. Imposture was the term used by his learned friend (Erskine) ; for how should the people understand the India Bill ? Do they know all the abuses practised on the Ganges ? Sir, they know that the loss, nay, the annihilation of India could not compensate for the subversion of the constitution. They could see that the bill raised up a new power, stripping the crown of its prerogative and the people of their chartered rights, in order to render its author a dictator over both his sovereign and his country."

Then descending to personal objects, "He calls me," continued Pitt, "a mere nominal Minister, the puppet of secret influence. It is because I disdain to become his puppet by resigning my office that he thus denominates me. But his contemptuous expressions shall never provoke me to resignation. My own honour and reputation I never will resign, to place myself under his protection, to accept a nomination from him, and thereby to become a poor, powerless, self-condemned, unprofitable Minister in his train—a Minister serviceable to him perhaps, but altogether incapable of serving my King or my country. If, indeed, I have, as he asserts, submitted to become the puppet and the minion of the crown, why will he condescend to admit me among his band ?"—"Severe, therefore, as the conflict is, my conscience, my duty, my attachment to the constitution, maintain me in my present arduous situation. It arises not from contempt or defiance of the constitutional resolutions of this assembly. Neither a

point of honour nor the love of power impels me to cling to office. The nature of the time, and, I will add, the voice of the country, call on me to defend this fortress, and nothing shall induce me to surrender it." He concluded by levelling the severest reproaches on Fox for stopping, or, as the Opposition termed it, suspending and postponing, the supplies, thus sacrificing the public interests to private animosity or ambition. No reply was made to this eloquent harangue, which seemed finally to extinguish all the fallacious hopes so long nourished by sanguine or credulous individuals of beholding an Administration founded on a broad basis. It became evident that no intentions of such a nature were seriously cherished or encouraged, and it was equally palpable that one of the two contending parties must ultimately sink under the superiority of his opponent.

[21st—27th February 1784.] Already Fox's majority, undermined by many causes, began to exhibit symptoms of rapid decay. While some members abandoned the Coalition in deference to the public voice or in obedience to the remonstrances of their immediate constituents, others yielded to suggestions of a personal or interested nature, and withdrew from a sinking party whose approaching extinction they anticipated. These latter individuals drew on themselves the bitterest sarcasms for their desertion, not only from Fox, but at different times from various members of the Opposition. The King's answer to the last address, drawn up with consummate skill, gracious in its language, conciliating in its professions, declaring how anxiously his Majesty desired to form "a firm, efficient, extended, and united Administration," yet lamented the inefficiency of his efforts for that purpose, denying that it would be advanced or facilitated by the previous dismissal of his Ministers, against whom



no charge or complaint was preferred, observing likewise that numbers of his subjects had expressed their satisfaction at the late change in his councils. He finally declined vacating the essential offices of executive government till he should see a prospect of effecting such a union as was recommended by his faithful Commons. This reply augmented the embarrassments while it added to the dismay of the Coalition leaders.

On the question of adjourning its consideration for two or three days, after a short debate Fox found himself, indeed, still in a majority, but it consisted only of seven, though near 350 members voted. He made, nevertheless, on the first day of the ensuing month, when the royal answer was read by the Speaker, another desperate attempt to carry the Ministerial trenches by storm, and sustained it by his accustomed display of eloquence. The debates themselves had, however, ceased to excite the same interest or to awaken the same attention as they had produced in earlier stages of the contest. Yet in a very full house, falling little short of 400, the Opposition maintained their superiority, and even rose to twelve. Another address was voted; but though it still besought the sovereign "to lay the foundation of a strong and stable Government by the previous removal of his present Ministers," it lamented "the failure of his endeavours for forming an united Administration, and their concern as well as disappointment at his Majesty's not having been advised to take any further steps for effecting the object." It was impossible more clearly to admit their inability to dictate to the crown, and, at the same time, their desire of dividing with Pitt the power of which it had become evidently impracticable wholly to deprive him.

The whole drift and object of Fox's speech were designed to prove, by reference to the events of the two preceding reigns, that both George I. and his successor had invariably complied with the expressed wishes of the House of Commons in the choice or dismissal of their Ministers. No principle of the constitution could indeed be more clearly recognised or more indisputable. Pitt himself admitted it. But its practical application in the present instance violated common sense, because neither cause nor reason was assigned for compelling the King to dismiss his confidential servants. "No man," observed the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his reply to Fox, "can more strongly maintain than myself the right of this House to advise the sovereign in the exercise of all his prerogatives; but that a declaration of this House disapproving his Majesty's Ministers should, *ipso facto*, compel him to dismiss them or oblige them to resign, I never will allow. Does the history of this country afford any instance of an Administration called on to retire from office without a cause?" Fox's majority constituted the only refutation of such reasoning.

[4th and 5th March 1784.] In his answer to their new address, the King nearly repeated his preceding declaration, only subjoining that "he did not consider the failure of his recent endeavours to form an extended and united Administration as constituting a final bar to its accomplishment, if it could have been obtained on principles of fairness and equality." But as though he had been desirous at the same time of extinguishing any such expectations, he added, "I know of no further steps that I can take likely to remove the difficulties which obstruct that desirable end." Fox, who beheld as in a mirror the sentence of his perpetual exclusion from office conveyed under these expressions of the sovereign,

after first postponing the consideration of his Majesty's reply during four days, endeavoured to throw an insurmountable barrier in the way of dissolution by delaying the progress of the Mutiny Bill through the House.<sup>1</sup> An animated debate ensued on the subject, in which, while the two leaders took only a comparatively inferior share, Lord North spoke at considerable length and with great ability. In the possible anticipation that the majority might be able to prevent the Mutiny Bill from passing, opinions had been hazarded from persons seated on the Ministerial benches that even though that annual Act should be suffered to expire, yet the King might keep the army together, both the men and the money for their payment being already voted. When, therefore, the consent of the House of Peers should be obtained, the crown, it was asserted, might have an army on foot with the recognised approbation of Parliament. Sir Adam Ferguson, member for the county of Ayr in North Britain, a man of sound sense, himself bred to the Scotch bar, where he had attained to eminence, supported the proposition.

This doctrine, which, it must be confessed, was not to be found in the "Bill of Rights," and which might in its effects have proved subversive of the

<sup>1</sup> The first Mutiny Bill dates from William III., 1689. When we had a brave but licentious militia rather than a standing army, the Commons, recognising the need of the latter, and yet determined not to make of it a power always ready for the King's hands, decreed that all soldiers should for certain crimes be subject to the sentence of a court-martial, the members of which were restricted from passing sentence after one o'clock in the day, that being the dinner-hour, after which even gentlemen were too often drunk and incapable. Since that period the House of Commons annually passes a bill which enables the sovereign to maintain, govern, and pay a certain number of soldiers during the ensuing year. By this arrangement England can hardly be said to have a standing army, for if the Commons were to refuse to renew the Mutiny Act for a year, military insubordination would cease to be illegal, the soldier would cease to be paid, and the army force would fall into the rank of common citizenship.—D.

British constitution, received, it is true, no direct sanction from Pitt, but it did not the less provoke and produce from various quarters the severest animadversion. Lord North observed that "such a discovery, if founded in law, might well make every man tremble for his liberty. Those who maintained it must, however, likewise assert that the army might be kept together without discipline and without punishment, the first being only enforced and the latter inflicted only under the Mutiny Act." He concluded by reminding Ministers "that notwithstanding the money had been voted for the payment of the army, yet, until the Act specifically appropriating it to that branch of the service had passed, no power or right existed in Administration to issue any sum, however small, for the purpose." Finally, he warned them that "as a prorogation or dissolution does away every vote of supply not previously carried into an Act of Parliament, if, therefore, the Minister should have recourse to such a measure, the votes of army, navy, ordnance, and supply of every kind must instantly be destroyed and fall to the ground." No answer was made or attempted from the Treasury bench to these denunciations, which did not indeed admit of any constitutional reply, and only served to show the critical position of the country, left without an efficient Government, and apparently on the verge of a suspension or extinction of all its establishments.

Powis and Marsham, who commonly acted in concert, uniting their efforts on this occasion, attacked the Minister in language of equal energy and acrimony. The former, after expressing his amazement at the King's answer, and wishing for time to shed a tear over the expiring dignity and to regulate the funeral procession of the House of Commons, lamented that Administration appeared to be deter-

mined on prosecuting their mad career and on elevating prerogative above privilege. Marsham reiterated the same sentiments, while he protested that no act could be more remote from his intention than to delay the public business or to plunge the country into confusion. Rigby, who had been called on by the Attorney-General only a few days before to pay into the Exchequer the large balances of public money remaining in his hands, a demand of which he loudly complained as harsh and illiberal, though he could not venture directly to oppose or resist it, came forward once more very conspicuously in the course of the debate. With that blunt, bold, dictatorial, and coarse style of oratory which always characterised him, but of which, since the extinction of Lord North's Government, he had exhibited comparatively few specimens, he reprobated the audacity of a Minister who presumed to remain in office with a majority of the House of Commons against him; observing that it was reserved for the present days to produce a Chancellor of the Exchequer who said to Parliament, "I care not for your majority; the King has appointed me, and you have nothing to do with the business." He finished by declaring that his blood boiled with indignation at the bare mention of retaining an army without a Mutiny Bill. Pitt did not condescend to notice these personal sarcasms or animadversions, which, he well knew, however they might operate within the walls of the assembly where they were pronounced, would produce no injurious consequences to him among the people without doors. On the division for adjourning the committee upon the Mutiny Bill, he was again left in a minority of nine, the numbers being 171 against 162, Fox still retaining his slender possession of the House.

[*8th March 1784.*] The termination of this great

conflict, on which not only England but all Europe had their eyes fixed, and which had already lasted near eleven weeks, to the suspension of every kind of public business, could not, however, be longer protracted by any efforts of eloquence or any combinations of faction. In terms of gracious yet firm determination the King had twice refused to comply with the demand of a majority of the Lower House, and that majority was become not less odious to the people at large than it had proved itself hostile to the crown or the Administration. So unnatural a state of things carried in its essence the seeds of its speedy extinction. Fox, though apparently master of the House, found himself unable to advance, and he could not remain stationary or recede without exposing his party to ridicule, while they were silently undermined and diminished in numbers from day to day. His embarrassments, which did not admit of concealment, necessarily augmented the confidence of his Ministerial adversaries. Nor did he attempt to disguise them when the consideration of his Majesty's answer to the last address came before the House. In terms of querulous indignation he stigmatised the reply as a compound of contradiction, duplicity, insult, and violation of the British constitution. Having attempted to justify and defend the right of the Commons to demand the removal of Ministers without stating their reasons or assigning any specific cause for such dismissal, he avowed that the only becoming measure now left was to move a resolution that "whoever should advise his Majesty to continue his present Administration was an enemy to his country." But however disposed and desirous he might be to proceed to this act, he was restrained by his consciousness that he could not carry with him even a majority of the most limited description

if he made the attempt. Many of his adherents had already announced to him their determination to proceed no further, accompanied with menaces of withdrawing their support if he tried so desperate an experiment. Thus situated, Fox stopped; and after loading Ministers with the bitterest reproaches for having, as he asserted, upset the country, involved public credit in remediless confusion, suffered our foreign concerns to run to ruin, and incurred the guilt of leaving our East Indian possessions a prey to every species of enormity, speculation, and tyranny, he declared that it was not his intention to stop the supplies. While he charged Pitt with inordinate ambition, as well as with having manifested a decided aversion to political union, he finished by only moving, not an address, but a representation to the King. It was long, expostulatory, argumentative, if not criminating, and recapitulated all the points on which the crown and the Commons had so obstinately contended, but it contained no new matter, except lamenting that "his Majesty's advisers had not thought fit to suggest any further steps for removing the difficulties which impeded the formation of an extended Administration."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer took little or no part in the debate which ensued on that evening. Dundas, however, supplied his place with great acuteness, energy, and severity. Retorting on the Opposition all the accusations brought forward by them against Ministers for pursuing a mad and desperate career, to the subversion of the constitution, whose true principles they outraged, he endeavoured to show that Fox's experience proved the incapacity of the House of Commons itself, however powerful a branch of the Legislature it might be, to enforce its own unconstitutional resolutions.

He treated the representation as a manifesto, calculated to delude the nation by disguising the real intention of Fox, which aimed at elevating the Speaker's mace above the royal sceptre, and giving virtually to the representatives of the people the right of naming Ministers. Towards the conclusion of his able harangue, after vindicating Pitt from the imputation of opposing a union of parties if it could have been effected on fair and honourable principles, he alluded with great force, though guardedly and hypothetically, to the well-authenticated lists of peerages, offices, and emoluments known to be promised to their adherents by the Opposition leaders, who thus condescended to avail themselves of every engine of seduction or corruption—engines by which it was obvious the country might be as completely enslaved and the constitution subverted as by the worst minion of the most wicked or arbitrary monarch.

Seldom have I heard Dundas, during the course of his long and brilliant parliamentary career, display more ability or eloquence than on that evening, which may, in fact, be regarded as having terminated the contest between Pitt and Fox, between the crown and a majority of the House of Commons. "Why will not the right honourable gentleman," observed he, "insert in his manifesto that this House claims a right of putting a negative on his Majesty's appointment of Ministers without assigning any reason? Because he knows that such a pretension might alarm the country, and then counter-declarations might appear against it."—"But let me suppose for a moment, that instead, as the constitution directs, of the sovereign naming and protecting Ministers, this assembly should assume both these privileges; in that case, a combination of men might pay as servile court to individual members of Parliament as ever



minion did to a despotic prince. If the House exercise the right of nomination and of control, any abandoned faction commanding a majority, by artifice within doors and by corruption without, by promises of peerages, places, and emoluments, may so entrench themselves, that if they can likewise name themselves Ministers, the country may be as completely subjected and the constitution as totally overturned as by the most able or systematic tyrant."

This mirror, though only held up as a fiction or an hypothesis, reflected most distinctly to every beholder the image of the Coalition. Fox made no reply to Dundas, but Burke, who, ever since the rejection of the East India Bill, as if overcome by his second dismissal from the Pay Office, had scarcely once risen in the House or taken his accustomed share throughout the discussions within its walls, made ample amends on that night for his preceding silence. Though he spoke with great animation and with equal eloquence, yet no exertions could sustain a declining as well as unpopular party, or infuse vigour into its component members. Even the subject of controversy itself, agitated and exhausted by so many repetitions, no longer inspired the same interest, the greatest ingenuity being scarcely able to suggest any new ideas or to strike out any fresh matter of argument. Uncommon anxiety was manifested and impatience displayed for the division, which took place about midnight, when Fox's majority became reduced to one solitary vote, the numbers on each side considerably exceeding those on the division of the 5th of March. Three hundred and eighty-five members were present, of whom 191 divided with Opposition, and 190 with Administration. Great exultation was expressed by the Ministerial side of the House, while

corresponding depression appeared on the opposite benches at so decisive a symptom of the approaching fall of the Coalition.

[*9th March 1784.*] The political spell which had so long suspended and paralysed all the functions of Government was now dissolved, and on the ensuing day the Mutiny Bill, no longer opposed, passed through the committee. Fox, divested of that control which he had exercised over the assembly ever since it met in November, appeared there in person, but "shorn of his beams;" nor can we consider the discussions which subsequently arose on various points as other than mere conversations, since no division was ever again attempted by the Opposition down to the period of the prorogation and dissolution of Parliament. Yet scarcely any debate which took place during the interesting session under our review opened more curious matter of speculation or of controversy than the one that followed Fox's defeat. Powis and Marsham, who had taken so conspicuous a part throughout the whole contest, appeared for the last time on the theatre. The first, in a speech replete with pointed animadversions, and conceived with great powers of mind, endeavoured, while he justified himself from the charge of inconsistency in his conduct, to throw on Pitt the accusation of duplicity or insincerity in his pretended negotiation for forming an extended Administration. He admitted that the House of Commons and the Minister having engaged in a constitutional contest, the former was conquered, "for though scarcely a century had elapsed since a vote of the Commons could bestow a crown, it could not in 1784 procure the dismissal of a Minister." Having related with apparent exactitude the leading points on which had hinged the attempt to produce an

interview between the Duke of Portland and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as the first indispensable step towards a general union, he hesitated not to declare that "all the concession was on one side, while the Minister refused either explanation or the smallest advance leading to conciliation." Pitt made, it is true, a prompt, able, and animated reply to this imputation; but I will fairly own that it impressed me as more rhetorical than solid, and carried with it no conviction, though the reasons assigned by him for the rupture of the proposed conference, if not severely scrutinised, appear specious and reasonable to the ear.

I ought here to observe, that though Powis and Marsham seemed to perform equal parts in this portion of our history, and might be considered as joint conductors of the St. Alban's Tavern meeting, no comparison could be made between their respective talents. Marsham was an ordinary man, cast by Nature in her coarsest mould, of good intentions and plain sense, without ornament or decoration of any kind. But Powis possessed a classic and a cultivated understanding, strong feelings, a natural, ardent, and winning command of words, with much discrimination of character. Though in my opinion his reverence for the House of Commons blinded him to such a point as to prevent him from perceiving or recognising how Fox had converted that assembly into a mere engine of his ambition, while Pitt really defended the constitution against the House; yet I do not on that account consider Powis as entitled to less respect under every point of view. Some parts of his speech on the present occasion were of uncommon beauty, warm colouring, and great truth. I allude particularly to his description of the forces led on by the Minister, whom he divided into three squadrons, having each their appropriate

characteristics. "The first" (whom I have mentioned already elsewhere), said Powis, "may be denominated his body-guard, composed of light young troops, who discharge their little arrows with no ordinary dexterity against all that refuse allegiance to their leader. The second is his corps of royal volunteers, the steady champions of prerogative, ever ready to attack those who presume to oppose privilege against royal authority. The last is his legion of deserters, attached to him by no other tie or principle than interest, and who, having deserted to him from that motive, will quit him as soon as fortune and favour abandon him. Such, Mr. Speaker, is the composition of the army which has vanquished this assembly and conquered the constitution!" We must candidly admit that Powis was no common orator, nor ought we to be surprised that such parliamentary talents raised him ultimately to the peerage, conferred on him by the Minister whom he thus severely scrutinised.<sup>1</sup>

If, however, we admire his description of the Ministerial forces, which was the result of premeditation, and may be regarded only as a composition pronounced before the House of Commons, how much more admiration is excited by Pitt's reply, made on the instant, and delivered as soon as Powis sat down. After complimenting him on his versatile facility of displaying equal eloquence, on which ever side he spoke, whether supporting or opposing Administration, Pitt proceeded to comment on Powis's delineation of the army ranged under his own banner. Alluding to the first corps, "who threw their little arrows with so much dexterity," he observed, "Probably the honourable gentleman's armour has not been proof against the darts of these archers; for those little weapons, which he affects

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Powys was created Baron Lilford in 1794.—Ed.

to despise, appear to have galled him very severely. As to the prerogative volunteers, who form the second band, I am proud of their support, because prerogative forms a part of the constitution, like the House of Commons, and is consequently an object of my veneration. But why he should denominate the third squadron deserters I own myself at a loss to comprehend, merely because they may not think proper to advance through all the stages of faction into which it is attempted to precipitate this House." Having thus encouraged his own troops, he retorted on Powis, and endeavoured to show that no becoming testimonies of a sincere desire to unite with the Duke of Portland and to form a united Administration had been omitted by him in his Ministerial capacity during the course of the late negotiations.

Those persons who best knew the secret springs of affairs at the period under our review have, however, I believe, felt, and some of them have candidly avowed to me, that the First Minister could not sincerely desire, or even mean, to form a coalition with Fox. Nor, if he had wished it, can we easily conceive on what basis it could have reposed, that offered a prospect of completion, and still less of duration. We must suppose that Fox would have at least demanded the Treasury for the Duke of Portland, the Foreign Office for himself, and probably the Admiralty for his friend and relative Lord Keppel. Even though Lord North should have personally withdrawn his own pretensions, yet some of his connections—Lord Stormont or the Earl of Carlisle—would necessarily have been admitted into the Cabinet. Does any man imagine that Pitt, who had already attained in his own person to the head of the Treasury and of the Exchequer,—an eminence from which during seventeen years he stood firm, and from which

he at last may be said to have voluntarily descended,—would have retreated into the latter of those two employments merely to place the Duke of Portland in the former? His ambition was not made for such moderate limits. Still less can any person conceive that Fox would have consented to Pitt's continuance in his double financial situation, and have taken office as Secretary of State under him. How then was the political equipoise to have been adjusted on "fair and equal terms"? The Cabinet must have preponderated in favour of one or of the other candidate for power; and which of them would have submitted to become the subordinate? When Lord North struck his bargain with the Rockingham party, he consented to act under them a secondary part, receiving in compensation a share of the Ministerial spoils for himself and his followers, and obtaining from them protection against impeachment for the errors or calamities of the American war. The motives, therefore, for his conduct were obvious, natural, venial, perhaps justifiable in every sense. Lord North did not demand to be received among his new allies "on fair and equal terms." He exacted only indemnity, oblivion, and a participation of offices. But Pitt must have begun, like Sylla in antiquity, or like Fairfax in our own history, by laying down his power, at a moment too when he had nearly consolidated its tenure.

Other motives for avoiding such a connection with Fox would unquestionably suggest themselves to his mind. The late Secretary of State no longer constituted an object either of popular affection or of royal apprehension. His own imprudence, ambition, and rapacious policy had precipitated him from his elevation. Nor could the Minister have formed a junction with the colleague of Lord North, the author in his own person of the East India Bill,

without perhaps incurring some degree of political condemnation, if not of moral contamination or censure. Fox, indeed, might, and undoubtedly would, have consented to modify that obnoxious measure in a way to render it harmless to the constitution, but experience of the bitter fruits produced by the late Coalition held out no encouragement to Pitt for concluding a second similar union. He stood, moreover, on far higher ground than his antagonist, combining at once the favour of the sovereign, the attachment of the people, and the command of the House of Peers. How is it to be supposed that he would spontaneously descend from such a situation, and consent to mingle his future fortunes in some measure with a man whose line of public action he had stigmatised with the severest epithets, merely to conciliate the suffrages of the gentlemen who met at the St. Alban's Tavern? These reflections may probably induce us to believe that neither George III. nor his Minister could really intend to replace Fox in any degree on the eminence from which he had fallen, though during the progress of a contest in which he remained for many successive weeks master of a majority in the House of Commons, and before matters were ripe for their dissolution, deference towards that branch of the Legislature dictated an apparent compliance with their anxious wishes.

Pitt with great ability, in the course of his reply to Powis, probably conscious that he could not altogether disprove, however he might deny or repel, the charge of insincerity, contrived to bring forward a counter-accusation against him and Marsham. To both he indirectly applied the appellation of "a spy," as having obtained by a pretended impartiality access to the secrets of the two contending parties, while they enjoyed the privileges and immunities of ambassadors. They took fire at the term, as I

doubt not he intended they should, and after respectively vindicating themselves from so dishonourable an imputation, Marsham read in his place the letter addressed by the Duke of Portland to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. It served fully to prove that the chief of the Opposition party as anxiously desired to commence a negotiation with the First Minister as the latter dexterously eluded and avoided a conference. Marsham professed his own perfect conviction of the fact. So did Powis. "I never acted as a spy," indignantly exclaimed Marsham, "and I make no scruple of declaring my private opinion that I did not perceive in the Minister the same conciliatory spirit which was manifested by the Duke of Portland." Powis entered into much more minute details on the subject, embracing the respective demands or preliminaries insisted on by both parties previous to actual negotiations. Pitt exacted three conditions: Lord North's exclusion from the Cabinet, a renunciation of the objectionable parts of the India Bill, and an interview with the Duke of Portland "on fair and equal terms." All these points were promptly conceded. The Coalition, on their part, equally demanded three stipulations: first, Pitt's virtual, though not actual, resignation; secondly, that the Duke might receive personally from his Majesty the message recommending an interview; lastly, that the meaning of the word "equal" might be defined or explained. But all these points Pitt refused. Nor would he listen to any explanations on the subject which might facilitate the accomplishment of the object itself. Powis, after specifying every particular, subjoined, "Thus stood the balance between the two parties, one ready to make every concession, the other none. But why should a triumphant Minister make concessions?"



Fox spoke with his usual ability, though not in the commanding tone that had characterised him when conscious that he could dictate his pleasure to an obsequious majority. With more bitterness than was natural to him, he felicitated his rival on "having attained to something like a majority to support him;" nor did he spare his severest animadversions on those individuals who, having hitherto voted with Opposition, had recently changed sides and joined the Administration. Fox concluded by pointing out the delusion of Pitt's proposition to treat on "equal terms," while he rejected the offer made by the Duke of Portland that the Ministerial arrangement should be conducted "with attention to principles of equity and fairness." There could remain no doubt in the mind of any impartial person that the expressions "fair and equal" were in themselves ambiguous, and understood in different or opposite senses by the two contending parties. But these recriminations, however they might for a moment agitate the minds of men in private society, no longer impeded the progress of public business, the House voting on the ensuing evening the extraordinaries of the navy without a division.

[11th—22d March 1784.] It became indeed more and more apparent from day to day, that Pitt's machinery being now nearly complete, a dissolution of Parliament would not be long delayed. Yet the Opposition still fondly indulged a hope—for it did not amount to a belief—that as no act of appropriation had passed, though the supplies were voted, Ministers would not dare to apply the public money to specific purposes contrary to all precedent, if not to law, and in direct violation of the prohibitions of the House. Various attempts were made to sound the Minister on this delicate point, but without effect. Fox, however, took no personal

part in them, and though he occasionally attended in his place, I believe he hardly, if ever, spoke on any subject during the last eleven or twelve days that Parliament continued in existence. Burke remained equally mute; while Powis and Marsham, engaged in preparations for an approaching general election, disappeared altogether from a scene where they had recently performed the principal characters. The little degree of opposition still experienced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer arose from the adherents of Lord North, or was made by that nobleman himself. Sir Grey Cooper, when the order of the day was moved for going into a committee of supply on the estimates for the extraordinaries on the army, conscious that it offered the last occasion which would present itself for protesting against a dissolution, expatiated with considerable energy on the infraction of the constitution that would arise from such a measure. He at the same time warned the Ministers that "to issue money for the pay of the forces contrary to a resolution of the House, declaring such a proceeding to be a high crime and misdemeanour, and without any Appropriation Act," was not only illegal, but a subversion of the very tenure by which the King held his crown, namely, a vote of Parliament. No answer whatever was returned to these denunciations from the Treasury bench, but the supply being voted in the committee without any division taking place, the House adjourned to the following day.

[23d March 1784.] As the immediate dissolution of Parliament had now become matter of universal notoriety, and preparations for carrying it into effect were already making in the public offices, a considerable attendance was produced in the Lower House by curiosity to witness its extinction rather than from any other motive. The First Minister

appearing in his place, was assailed from various quarters on the question being put by the Speaker that "the report on the army extraordinaries should be read a first time." Eden<sup>1</sup> led the way, followed by Lord North as well as by General Conway. While each of them avowed that they considered themselves as addressing for the last time an assembly which they knew was on the point of being dissolved, they did not remonstrate or menace in less animated terms on the supposition that such a measure should be actually carried into execution. Every argument adduced in the preceding debate was reiterated, pressed, and urged with augmented force of language. The Chancellor of the Exchequer remaining nevertheless contumeliously silent, the report was read; but on a motion being made for the second reading, Lord North once more rose, and after some expostulations relative to the contemptuous treatment experienced by the House upon the present occasion, demanded "on what principle of law, on what doctrine respecting the constitution, on what argument, or on what authority, when Parliament should be dissolved, would Ministers presume to issue money for the subsistence of the army?"

Pitt had not, however, advanced so far to be now deterred from consummating his triumph by the impotent threats of a powerless and exhausted as well as an unpopular faction. He cut the knot which he was unable to untie, and declining any discussion of those great constitutional points which he could not solve, and the infraction of which he could not abstractedly justify, confidently trusted his

<sup>1</sup> William Eden, third son of Sir Robert Eden, Bart., of West Auckland, created Baron Auckland in the peerage of Ireland in 1789, and Baron Auckland of West Auckland in the peerage of Great Britain in 1793. He died 28th May 1814.—Ed.

cause to the universal sentiment of national approbation for covering any deviation from parliamentary usage. Like Iago, who, in reply to every inquiry, answers—

“Ask me no questions; what you know, you know,”

he briefly observed that “gentlemen might make whatever speeches they chose, and the House might act as it thought proper; he would not say one word upon the subject.” The report being then read a second time, the House adjourned, and was summoned on the following day to attend the House of Peers,<sup>1</sup> where the King having prorogued Parliament, after pronouncing a short but judicious speech from the throne well calculated for the emergency, stated it to be a “duty which he owed to the constitution and the country, under its actual circumstances, to return as speedily as possible to the sense of his people by convoking a new Parliament.” A dissolution followed within twenty-four hours, and the Coalition, confounded as well as overwhelmed amidst the storm which they had injudiciously excited, disappeared in an instant, leaving the fragments of their political greatness scattered in all directions.

[25th March 1784.] I have related these events as they passed under my own eyes, with the most rigid impartiality; and if I have dwelt minutely on the transactions or debates that took place in the House of Commons during the contest between Fox and Pitt, it must be remembered that within the walls of that assembly the history and the very existence of the country were concentrated during more than three months. We would vainly seek

<sup>1</sup> On the night of the 24th March thieves broke into Lord Thurlow's house, No. 45 Great Ormond Street, and stole the Great Seal out of the Chancellor's study. The thieves were discovered, but not until the seal, which was of silver, had been melted.—ED.

them elsewhere. All the functions of government stood still, while the sovereign, the peers, and the nation looked on, expecting the issue of so extraordinary a conflict, which must necessarily impress a new character on the opening year. Never did any king of Great Britain contend for so vast a stake since Charles I. In contemplating the scene, Pitt arrests our first attention.

Nothing in our annals subsequent to the accession of the House of Brunswick bore any analogy to his position. When we consider that he struggled against a majority of the House of Commons, conducted by such talents as those of Fox, from the 19th of December 1783 up to the 9th of March 1784, on any day of which interval he might have been impeached, and if we further reflect that he vanquished so vast a combination of party without prematurely recurring to a dissolution, till all his necessary arrangements of every kind were completed, and almost the whole nation had declared on his side, we shall probably admit that, as no such instance occurs before him, no similar example will probably ever be again exhibited among us. If, in compliance with Lord Temple's opinion, he had begun by dissolving the Parliament as soon as he was appointed First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer in December 1783, when the people at large, and when even the inhabitants of London, as well as of Westminster, were imperfectly informed on the nature and tendency of the East India Bill, it is possible that a very different result might have been the consequence.

Fox's defeat arose from one fundamental error or miscalculation, into which he was nevertheless led by the experience of all parliamentary contest, namely, that a majority of the House of Commons could compel the crown to dismiss its Ministers, or could

oblige the Ministers themselves to give in their own resignation. In his hands this constitutional weapon, hitherto irresistible, lost its edge and became harmless. He affected to attribute its failure to a spirit of delusion, which, as he asserted, and as his adherents maintained, had incapacitated the British people to distinguish truth from error, imposture from reality. There is, however, no sophistry capable of blinding completely a whole nation upon points so level to every understanding, and if there existed any delusion in the estimate formed by the country respecting the nature and tendency of the East India Bill, the delusion still survives at this day in all its force. But there existed another delusion into which Fox himself fell when he erroneously conceived that a majority of the Lower House, in whatever manner acquired, and whatever measures or objects it might pursue, must necessarily dictate its pleasure to the sovereign, to the House of Peers, and to the public. The two former would, indeed, if unsupported by the body of the people of England, have been found only dust in the balance when engaged in a struggle with the genuine representatives of the people, the real organs of their will and opinion. Charles I. and James II. each made the experiment, by which the former lost his head and the latter his crown. But George III. neither attempted to exercise oppressive and antiquated, if not illegal prerogatives, nor to impose on us a religion prohibited by law and odious to his subjects. And never did the British constitution manifest its latent energies so strongly as in the very act of arresting that assembly, which, calling itself the representatives of the nation, became in the instance before us the instruments of the ambition of a faction, or rather of an individual.

The steadiness, the principles, and the repugnance

of the King towards the Coalition operated as powerful secondary agents, but they were not primary causes. Fox, attentive only to the three branches of the constitution which he considered as omnipotent, regarded as null the nation itself. But when awakened, roused, and informed, the people hurled him in an instant from his situation. For it was not the dissolution of Parliament which would have reduced him and his party to insignificance if the public opinion and confidence had accompanied him. Of this truth a great example was exhibited in 1780, when Lord North dissolved the Parliament. The Government was not idle on the occasion, and a large sum was believed to have been expended in endeavours to procure favourable returns to the new House of Commons. Yet so unpopular was the sovereign at that time, so weak the Administration, and so odious the American war, that the First Minister derived little permanent strength or advantage from the measure. He held out with difficulty for one session, and surrendered early in the next, on the 20th of March 1782. Fox, on the contrary, remained during several years only an illustrious victim of his inordinate ambition, seated on the Opposition bench till the memorable malady of his Majesty in 1788 recalled him for a moment into day, only to plunge him deservedly anew into greater political depression.

The obligations which the King owed to Pitt for liberating him from the chains of the Coalition, at the time when they must have been riveted, were certainly of the first magnitude. No other subject in his dominions would probably have attempted, but assuredly no other individual would have successfully performed, so important and arduous a service. After witnessing the formation and extinction of three Administrations within the space of

little more than twenty months, George III. beheld in prospect domestic tranquillity, personal freedom, and national prosperity. Nor were these the only benefits that resulted to him from the events that have been related. All the errors and misfortunes of his reign seemed to be swallowed up and forgotten in the grave of the Coalition. The odium of Lord Bute's Ministry and the peace of 1763, aggravated by the prosecution of Wilkes, the humiliating negotiation and compromise relative to the Falkland Islands, which "Junius" had consigned to perpetual reprobation; lastly, the disgraces of the American war, followed by the loss of an empire beyond the Atlantic, for which national defalcation of power and territory the King was regarded by a very large portion of his subjects as peculiarly responsible; the accumulated evils of three-and-twenty years disappeared at once and were obliterated. Only the virtues of the sovereign seemed to survive in the memory of his people. The same prince who in March 1782 laboured under a load of prejudice and unpopularity, was considered in March 1784 as the guardian of the constitution, worthy the warmest testimonies of affection, gratitude, and respect. They poured in upon him from all quarters, acknowledging the blessings of his paternal government, and approving the recent interference of his prerogative for the destruction of an unprincipled faction. Wilkes, who had been among the most ardent opposers of the East India Bill, and among the foremost supporters of Pitt in Parliament, as member for Middlesex reappeared at St. James's, where he met with the most gracious reception. A new order of events and a new era seemed to commence from this auspicious date. In fact, if I would point out the period of time, from the commencement of this long as well as eventful reign, during



which the sovereign and the country equally enjoyed most tranquillity as well as felicity, I should not hesitate to name the interval, comprising about four years and a half, that succeeded Pitt's triumph over Fox in the spring of 1784, down to the King's severe intellectual seizure in the autumn of 1788. Here, therefore, as at a political landmark, I shall conclude the third part of the "Historical Memoirs of my Own Time," reserving its continuation, or rather withholding its publication, till after my own demise.





POSTHUMOUS MEMOIRS

OF

MY OWN TIME.







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OF

## MY OWN TIME.

—o—

*APRIL 1784.*

**D**URING the interval of near eight weeks which elapsed between the dissolution of the old Parliament and the time indicated for the convocation of the new assembly, all attention was now directed to the general election. The successful exertions of the Ministry, principally directed by Robinson, had gradually undermined the majority possessed by Lord North and Fox, till it sunk nearly to an equality; and the sovereign then interposing his prerogative, dissolved the Parliament; but the people, and the people only, could sustain Pitt in his elevation. Never since the accession of the House of Hanover did the Crown or the Treasury make less pecuniary efforts for obtaining favourable returns to the House of Commons than in 1784. The general partiality felt towards Government throughout the country, which senti-

ment rose to enthusiasm, together with the condemnation which the Coalition had incurred—these sentiments supplied the want of every other means. Corruption for once became almost unnecessary; and such was the violence of the popular predilection, that instances occurred in various boroughs of men being forcibly stopped, detained, and finally returned as members to Parliament, who were accidentally passing through the place of election, but whose known political principles constituted a sufficient recommendation.

However productive of national benefit in the aggregate this spirit might be esteemed, yet there occurred partial and individual examples of exclusion which all moderate persons regretted. It was difficult to see without concern a man of such integrity as Lord John Cavendish making way at York for Viscount Galway.<sup>1</sup> I well knew the latter nobleman, of whom it would be difficult to commemorate anything very meritorious, and who, whenever he rose to address the House, as he sometimes did during long debates at very late hours, was usually in a state which should have impelled him to silence. His exertions at York in opposing the Cavendish interest, when combined with his affinity to the Rutland family, placed him nevertheless about the person of the King as Comptroller of his Majesty's Household, decorated with the order of the Bath.

Mr. Coke, whose descent, respectable character, immense landed estates, and agricultural pursuits or occupations, so beneficial in their tendency, had seated him as representative for the county of Norfolk,—a man relative to whom Sheridan many years afterwards observed, speaking in his place, that

<sup>1</sup> Robert Monckton Arundell, fourth Viscount Galway in the peerage of Ireland, born 4th July 1758, died 23d July 1810.—ED.

"Mr. Coke<sup>1</sup> disdained to hide his head within a coronet when offered him,"—yet even he, overborne by the current, made way for Sir John Wodehouse, who has since been elevated by Pitt to the British peerage.<sup>2</sup>

George Byng, whose ardent devotion and indefatigable zeal, which rendered him highly useful to his party, induced Sheridan to exclaim, on hearing of Byng's ill success at Brentford—

'I could have better spared a better man ;'

after a desperate contest maintained against Wilkes for the county of Middlesex, yielded to his more popular antagonist. So strong was the general enthusiasm, that neither high birth, nor extended property, nor long parliamentary services, nor talents however eminent, could always secure a seat, unless sustained by opinions favourable to Administration.

Erskine, who had so recently been brought in by Fox for Portsmouth, disappeared as a member of the House ; but being employed in his professional capacity as counsel for Fox on the Westminster election, he soon reappeared at the bar, where, by the insulting keenness of his observations on the proceedings in Covent Garden, he speedily attracted animadversion.

David Hartley, the "dinner-bell" of the House, whose interminable speeches were, if possible, still more dreaded for their dulness than for their length ; General Conway, so lately placed at the head of the forces ; Mr. Foljambe, the heir and representative of Sir George Savile, as member for the county of York—were all overwhelmed in the common destruction. Pitt became a candidate for the Univer-

<sup>1</sup> Thomas William Coke, born 1752, M.P. for the county of Norfolk ; created Earl of Leicester in 1837, and died in 1842.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Sir John Wodehouse was created Baron Wodehouse of Kimberley, 26th October 1797.—ED.

sity of Cambridge; and that learned body, conscious that "the spirit of distributing prebends and bishoprics" had been transferred from the Coalition, placed him at the head of the poll, giving him Lord Euston as his colleague; thus rejecting both their late representatives, the Hon. John Townshend<sup>1</sup> and the Solicitor-General Mansfield.

Few men held a higher place in Fox's friendship than the former, a place to which he was well entitled by the elegance of his mind, his various accomplishments, and steady adherence throughout life. Though not endowed with eminent parliamentary talents, he possessed an understanding highly cultivated, set off by the most pleasing manners. If party could ever feel regret, it would have been excited by his exclusion from a seat so honourable in itself as that of the University of Cambridge, to which he had attained by unwearied personal exertions.

Earl Verney<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Thomas Grenville, members for the county of Buckingham, the latter of whom, unlike his two brothers, remained firmly attached to Fox; Sir Charles Bunbury, who had long represented Suffolk; and various other eminent supporters of the Coalition, were swept away by the popular effervescence.

Pitt's triumph remained, however, still incomplete while his antagonist continued to represent Westminster; and every effort was made by the Court as well as by the Government to expel Fox from a situation so painfully conspicuous in Parliament. All minor election interests were swallowed up in this struggle, which held not only the capital, but

<sup>1</sup> Son of the fourth Viscount Townshend. On his father's advancement as Marquis Townshend in 1786, he was known as Lord John Townshend. He was born 19th January 1757, and died 28th February 1833. His eldest son succeeded as fourth Marquis Townshend.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> This Irish title became extinct in 1791.—ED.



the nation in suspense ; while it rendered Covent Garden and its vicinity, during successive weeks,<sup>1</sup> a scene of outrage, and even of bloodshed, resembling the Polish dietines.

Three candidates appeared on the hustings, of whom Lord Hood stood foremost, having been selected for his naval services as a proper person to come forward on the occasion. Those services though not equally resplendent with Lord Rodney's victory over De Grasse, had nevertheless strongly recommended him to general favour ; nor were there wanting persons who considered him as Rodney's superior in maritime science and nautical skill.

Sir Cecil Wray had already represented Westminster in the late House of Commons during nearly two years, having succeeded to the vacancy caused in 1782 by Lord Rodney's elevation to the peerage. He united many qualifications which in ordinary times might have rendered him an eligible representative for that city. Descended from an honourable and ancient stock, raised to the baronetage by James I. nearly at the period when that order of hereditary knighthood was originally instituted, he possessed likewise a considerable estate in the county of Lincoln. His moral character stood unblemished ; and if he could boast of no superior ability, yet his conciliating manners acquired him many friends. Unfortunately, as contested elections bring out into daylight every defect, his enemies accused Sir Cecil of parsimony ; perhaps more inimical to success in an appeal to popular favour than much graver faults. Notwithstanding the popular prejudice thus excited against him, the poll, which had commenced on the first day of April, inclined

<sup>1</sup> The election lasted forty days, the whole time allowed by law. "It is Fox's wish," wrote Sir Gilbert Elliot to Sir James Harris, "to have *as many gentlemen* as he can on his poll."—D.

during the greater part of that month in his favour. As late as the 26th he still maintained a small superiority in numbers over Fox, and sanguine persons anticipated with a degree of confidence his final success.

[*May 1784.*—In so critical a state of the contest, when every hour became precious, a new and powerful ally appeared, who soon changed the aspect of affairs, and succeeded in ultimately placing Fox, though not first, yet second on the list of candidates. This auxiliary was no other than the Duchess of Devonshire,<sup>1</sup> one of the most distinguished females of high rank whom the last century produced. Her personal charms constituted her smallest pretension to universal admiration; nor did her beauty consist, like that of the Gunnings, in regularity of features and faultless formation of limbs and shape; it lay in the amenity and graces of her deportment, in her irresistible manners and the seduction of her society. Her hair was not without a tinge of red, and her face, though pleasing, yet had it not been illuminated by her mind, might have been considered as an ordinary countenance. Descended in the fourth degree lineally from Sarah Jennings, the wife of John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, she resembled the portraits of that celebrated woman. In addition to the external advantages which she had received from nature and fortune, she possessed an ardent temper, susceptible of deep as well as strong impressions; a cultivated understanding, illuminated by a taste for poetry and the fine arts; much sensibility, not exempt, perhaps, from vanity and coquetry. To her mother, the Dowager Countess Spencer, she was attached with more than

<sup>1</sup> Georgiana, eldest daughter of the first Earl Spencer. She was born in 1757, married to the fifth Duke of Devonshire in 1774, and died in 1806.—ED.

common filial affection, of which she exhibited pecuniary proofs rarely given by a daughter to her parent. Nor did she display less attachment to her sister, Lady Duncannon. Her heart might be considered as the seat of those emotions which sweeten human life, adorn our nature, and diffuse a nameless charm over existence.

Lady Duncannon,<sup>1</sup> however inferior to the Duchess in elegance of mind and in personal beauty, equalled her in sisterly love. During the month of July 1811, a very short time before the decease of the late Duke of Devonshire, I visited the vault in the principal church of Derby, where repose the remains of the Cavendish family. As I stood contemplating the coffin which contained the ashes of that admired female, the woman who accompanied me pointed out the relics of a bouquet which lay upon the lid, nearly collapsed into dust. "That nosegay," said she, "was brought here by the Countess of Besborough, who had designed to place it with her own hands on her sister's coffin; but, overcome by her emotions on approaching the spot, she found herself unable to descend the steps conducting to the vault. In an agony of grief she knelt down on the stones, as nearly over the place occupied by the corpse as I could direct, and there deposited the flowers, enjoining me the performance of an office to which she was unequal. I fulfilled her wishes."

Such as I have here described her was Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, who, for her beauty, accomplishments, and the decided part which she took against the Minister of her day, may be aptly compared to Anne Genevieve de Bourbon, Duchesse de Longueville, in the French annals, immortalised

<sup>1</sup> Henrietta Frances, second daughter of John, first Earl Spencer, married Frederick, Viscount Duncannon, afterwards third Earl of Bessborough. She died 14th November 1821.—ED.

by La Rochefoucault's passion for her, nor less famous for her opposition to Anne of Austria and Mazarin during the minority of Louis XIV. This charming person gave her hand, at seventeen years of age, to William, Duke of Devonshire, a nobleman whose constitutional apathy formed his distinguishing characteristic. His figure was tall and manly, though not animated or graceful, his manners always calm and unruffled. He seemed to be incapable of any strong emotion, and destitute of all energy or activity of mind. As play became indispensable in order to rouse him from this lethargic habit and to awaken his torpid faculties, he passed his evenings usually at Brookes's, engaged at whist or faro. Yet beneath so quiet an exterior he possessed a highly improved understanding, and on all disputes that occasionally arose among the members of the club relative to passages of the Roman poets or historians, I know that appeal was commonly made to the Duke, and his decision or opinion was regarded as final. Inheriting with his immense fortune the hereditary probity characteristic of the family of Cavendish, if not a superior man, he was an honourable and respectable member of society. Nor did the somnolent tranquillity of his temper by any means render him insensible to the seduction of female charms. The present Duchess-Dowager of Devonshire,<sup>1</sup> after having long constituted the object of his avowed attachment, and long maintained the firmest hold of his affections as Lady Elizabeth Foster, finished by becoming his second wife.

The Opposition, if considered as a party, enjoyed at this time some political advantages, which pro-

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, second wife of the fifth Duke. They were married in 1809. She was daughter of the fourth Earl of Bristol, and widow of John Thomas Foster. She died at Rome in 1824, having survived the Duke thirteen years.—ED.

bably never can be again realised in so eminent a degree as they existed in 1784. Three palaces, situate at the west end of the town, the gates of which were constantly thrown open to every parliamentary adherent of the Coalition, then formed rallying-points of union. The first of these structures, Devonshire House, placed on a commanding eminence in Piccadilly opposite to the Green Park, seemed to look down on the Queen's House,<sup>1</sup> constructed by Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire, in a situation much less favoured by nature. In right of his maternal descent from the Boyles, Earls of Burlington, the magnificent mansion of that name in the same street, at a very inconsiderable distance to the east,<sup>2</sup> constituted likewise a part of the Duke of Devonshire's patrimonial property. It was then occupied by his brother-in-law, the Duke of Portland, who, as the acknowledged leader of the Whigs since the Marquis of Rockingham's decease, could not shut his doors, even had he been so inclined, against his followers. Carlton House itself, newly become the residence of the Prince of Wales, might be considered as the asylum of all Fox's friends, where perpetual entertainments of every description cheered them under the heavy reverse of fortune which they had recently experienced, and held out the prospect of a more prosperous futurity. Meanwhile the month of April verging to its close, and almost all the inhabitants of the metropolis who possessed votes for Westminster having been already polled, there remained no resource equal to the emergency except by bringing up the voters residing in

<sup>1</sup> Built on the site of Arlington House. Buckingham House remained much as the Duke of Buckingham had left it until George IV. made extensive alterations and turned it into a palace. Sheffield was Duke of the county of Buckingham, but was always styled Duke of Buckingham, and not of Buckinghamshire.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Burlington House.—ED.

the outskirts of the town or in the circumjacent villages.

This task, however irksome it might be to a female of so elevated a class, and little consonant as it seemed even to female delicacy under certain points of view, the Duchess of Devonshire cheerfully undertook in such a cause. Having associated to the execution her sister, Viscountess Duncannon, who participated the Duchess's political enthusiasm, these ladies, being previously furnished with lists of outlying voters, drove to their respective dwellings. Neither entreaties nor promises were spared. In some instances even personal caresses were said to have been permitted, in order to prevail on the surly or inflexible, and there can be no doubt of common mechanics having been conveyed to the hustings on more than one occasion by the Duchess in her own coach.

The effect of so powerful an intervention soon manifested itself. During the first days of May, Fox, who a month earlier had fallen above a hundred votes behind Sir Cecil, passed him by at least that number. Conscious, nevertheless, that the least relaxation in their efforts might probably enable the adversary to resume his superiority, and aware of the exertions which Government would make to ensure the success of their candidate, the Duchess, sacrificing her time wholly to the object, never intermitted for a single day her laborious toils. In fact, Ministers did not fail to bring forward an opponent of no ordinary description in the person of the Countess of Salisbury,<sup>1</sup> whose husband had been recently appointed to the office of Lord Chamberlain.

<sup>1</sup> Mary Amelia, daughter of the first Marquis of Devonshire. She was born in 1750, married to the Earl, afterwards Marquis of Salisbury, in 1773. She was burnt to death at Hatfield House in 1835.—ED.

In graces of person and demeanour, no less than in mental attainments, Lady Salisbury yielded to few females of the court of George III. But she wanted, nevertheless, two qualities eminently contributing to success in such a struggle, both which met in her political rival. The first of these was youth, the Duchess numbering scarcely twenty-six years, while the Countess had nearly completed thirty-four.

The Duchess of Devonshire never seemed to be conscious of her rank ; Lady Salisbury ceased not for an instant to remember, and to compel others to recollect it. Nor did the effects fail to correspond with the moral causes thus put into action. Every day augmenting Fox's majority, it appeared that on the 16th of May, to which period the contest was protracted, he stood 235 votes above Sir Cecil on the books of the poll.<sup>1</sup>

[17th May 1784.]—Under those circumstances it became unquestionably the duty of the returning officer to declare that Lord Hood and Fox possessed an ostensible plurality of votes. The high bailiff, Corbett, being in the interests of the Administration, chose nevertheless rather to violate all the rules laid down for governing elections, and even to leave Westminster wholly unrepresented in Parliament, than to return Fox as one of the members. Yielding to the demands for a scrutiny made by the friends of Sir Cecil, Corbett thus contrived to elude and to postpone all decision on the main point ; but he could not prevent the popular triumph of the "Man of the People," as he was denominated by his own adherents.

The procession in honour of Fox's election instantly took place. After having carried the suc-

<sup>1</sup> The exact state of the poll was—Hood, 6694 ; Fox, 6234 ; Wray, 5998.—ED.

cessful candidate, elevated in a chair adorned with laurel, through the principal streets at the west end of the town, the gates of Carlton House being thrown open expressly for the purpose, Fox, followed by the populace, passed through the court in front of the palace. The ostrich plumes, which transport us to the field of Cressy, and which during more than four centuries have constituted the crest of the successive heirs-apparent to the English throne, were openly borne before the newly-elected member; an exhibition that inspired many beholders with sentiments such as were felt by numbers among the Roman people when Antony displayed the deities of Egypt mingled with the eagles of the Republic :

“Interque signa, turpe, militaria,  
Sol adspicit canopeum.”

Nor were the eminent election services rendered by the Duchess of Devonshire and other distinguished females forgotten when celebrating so joyful an event; a flag, on which was inscribed “Sacred to Female Patriotism,” being waved by a horseman in the cavalcade. The equipages of the Dukes of Devonshire and Portland, drawn each by six horses, attracted less attention than Fox’s own carriage, on the box of which, or mounted on the braces and other parts, were seen the Hon. Colonel North, Lord North’s eldest son, afterwards Earl of Guildford; Mr. Adam, who, only a few years before, had wounded the member for Westminster in a duel;<sup>1</sup> and various other friends or followers of Lord North, now intermingled with their former adversaries. Burke was not, however, to be found among this motley group. The procession finally termi-

<sup>1</sup> An account of the duel is given in the “Annual Register,” 1775, pp. 235, 236. Fitzpatrick was Fox’s second, and Major Humberston Adam’s.—ED.



nated at Devonshire House, where, on its entering the great court in front of the edifice, the Prince of Wales, who had already saluted the successful candidate from the garden wall on the side of Berkeley Street, appeared within the balustrade before the mansion, accompanied by the most eminent individuals of both sexes attached to the Coalition. Fox then dismissed the assembled mob with a brief harangue ; but their intemperate joy was manifested at night by illuminations, to which succeeded some acts of brutal violence and insult, principally levelled against Lord Temple's house in Pall Mall,<sup>1</sup> who had become obnoxious to the party from the early and conspicuous share that he had taken in producing a change of Ministers.

[18th May 1784.]—These demonstrations of the exultation inspired by Fox's triumph appearing, nevertheless, still inadequate to the magnitude and importance of the occasion, the Prince determined to celebrate it by giving an appropriate entertainment at Carlton House. Having selected for that purpose the following morning, when all the rank, beauty, and talents of the Opposition party were assembled by invitation on the lawn of his palace, the weather being uncommonly fine, a splendid *fête* took place, precisely at the time when his Majesty was proceeding in state down St. James's Park in order to open the new Parliament. The wall of Carlton Gardens, and that barrier only, formed the separation between them. Here, while the younger part of the company were more actively engaged, might be contemplated, under the umbrage of trees, an exhibition such as fancy places in the Elysian Fields, the "*sedes discretas piorum*," where all mortal recollections or enmities are supposed to be obliterated. Lord North, dressed, like every other indivi-

<sup>1</sup> Buckingham House, now a portion of the War Office.—ED.

dual invited, in his new livery of blue and buff, beheld himself surrounded by those very persons who, scarcely fifteen months earlier, affected to regard him as an object of national execration, deserving capital punishment. They now crowded round him to admire the sallies of his wit or to applaud the playful charms of his conversation. Lord Derby and Lord Beauchamp,<sup>1</sup> two noblemen long opposed to each other; Colonel North and George Byng, enemies lately the most inveterate; Fitzpatrick and Adam, depositing their animosities at the Prince's feet, or rather at the altar of ambition and of interest, were here seen to join in perfect harmony.

The scene of festivity became transferred on the same night to Lower Grosvenor Street, where Mrs. Crewe, the lady of Mr. Crewe (then member for the county of Chester, since raised by Fox to the peerage in 1806), gave a splendid entertainment in commemoration of the victory obtained over Ministers in Covent Garden. Though necessarily conducted on a more limited scale than that of the morning, it exhibited not less its own appropriate features, and was composed of nearly the same company. Mrs. Crewe, the intimate friend of Fox, one of the most accomplished and charming women of her time, had exerted herself in securing his election, if not as efficaciously, yet as enthusiastically, as the Duchess of Devonshire. On this occasion the ladies, no less than the men, were all habited in blue and buff. The Prince of Wales was present in that dress. After supper; a toast having been given by his Royal Highness, consisting of the words "True blue and Mrs. Crewe," which was received with rapture, she rose, and proposed another health, expressive of her gratitude and not less laconic, namely, "True blue and all of you."

<sup>1</sup> Afterwards second Marquis of Hertford.—ED.

Nor did the exhibitions of party joy terminate here. Under the auspices of the heir-apparent, his residence presented, some days later, a second *fête* of the most expensive, magnificent, and varied description, prolonged in defiance of usage, and almost of human nature, from the noon of one day to the following morning. Every production that taste and luxury could assemble was exhausted, the foreign Ministers resident in London assisting at its celebration. A splendid banquet was served up to the ladies, on whom, in the spirit of chivalry, his Royal Highness and the gentlemen present waited while they were seated at table. It must be owned that on these occasions, for which he seemed peculiarly formed, he appeared to great advantage. Louis XIV. himself could scarcely have eclipsed the son of George III. in a ball-room, or when doing the honours of his palace surrounded by the pomp and attributes of luxury and royal state.

While the Opposition thus indulged their intemperate joy on the election victory won with so much difficulty, Pitt, more judiciously employed in cementing the foundations of his political elevation, distributed peerages among his adherents. He had early secured the powerful co-operation of the Duke of Northumberland, who, from his vast property, when added to his local and official influence throughout the county of Middlesex, possessed a commanding interest in Westminster.

This nobleman, from the condition of a Yorkshire baronet of the name of Smithson, had, in consequence of his marriage with the heiress of the Percys, been successively raised to the dignities of Earl and Duke of Northumberland. His eldest son, Earl Percy, having formed a matrimonial alliance with Lady Anne Stuart, daughter of the Earl of Bute, which proved equally unhappy and destitute of

issue, the Duchess, his mother, turned her eyes towards Lord Algernon, her second and only remaining son, as the best chance for perpetuating the line. Being of a delicate and feeble constitution, he had, by order of his physicians, visited the South of France, in which country he passed the winter of the year 1774 at the city of Aix in Provence. During an excursion which he made to Marseilles, Lord Algernon accidentally met, in private company, the second daughter of Mr. Burrell, a Commissioner of Excise.<sup>1</sup> Having accompanied her father to the shore of the Mediterranean, where he had repaired in pursuit of health, it was her fortune to make a deep impression on Lord Algernon. The Duchess of Northumberland, sinking under a decayed constitution, which was rapidly conducting her to the grave, and anxious to see her youngest son married, readily consented to their union, which took place in 1775, about eighteen months previous to her own decease. From this contingency may be said to have originated the rapid elevation of the Burrell family, one of the most singular events of our time.

Scarcely three years after Lady Algernon Percy's marriage, the youngest of her sisters bestowed her hand on the Duke of Hamilton, since whose death she has been, a second time, united to the Marquis of Exeter.

In 1779 the late Duke of Northumberland, then Earl Percy, having obtained a divorce from his Countess, selected for his second wife Mr. Burrell's sole remaining unmarried daughter.

But the fortune of the family was by no means

<sup>1</sup> Peter Burrell was M.P. for Haslemere, and Surveyor-General of Crown Lands. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth Amelia, married R. H. Bennett; his second daughter, Susan Isabella, married Lord Algernon Percy; his third daughter, Frances Julia, married Earl Percy; and the youngest, Elizabeth, married, 1. the eighth Duke of Hamilton, 2. Henry, Marquis of Exeter.—ED.

confined to the females. The only son, a young man, it must be owned, for I knew him well, of the most graceful person and the most engaging manners, having captivated the affections of Lady Elizabeth Bertie, eldest daughter of Peregrine, Duke of Ancaster, she married him. Scarcely had the nuptials taken place, when her brother, the young Duke, not yet twenty-three years of age, was carried off by a sudden and violent distemper. The ducal title reverted back to his uncle; but a barony of Edward II.'s creation, early in the fourteenth century, namely, Willoughby of Eresby, descended, together with great part of the Ancaster estates, to Lady Elizabeth Burrell. Nor did this peerage constitute her only dowry; with it she likewise inherited, during her life, the high feudal office of Lord Great Chamberlain of England, which has been ever since executed by her husband or son. Finally, Mr. Burrell himself, after being first knighted, was raised to the rank of a British peer in 1796 by the title of Lord Gwydir.<sup>1</sup>

In no private family within my remembrance has that prosperous chain of events which we denominate fortune appeared to be so conspicuously displayed or so strongly exemplified as in the case before us. The peerage of the Burrells was not derived from any of the obvious sources that almost exclusively and invariably conduct, among us, to that eminence. It did not flow from favouritism, like the dignities attained by Carr and Villiers under James I., or by the Earls of Warwick and of Holland in the succeeding reign. As little was it produced by female charms, such as first raised the Churchills in 1685,

<sup>1</sup> Peter Burrell the younger succeeded to the baronetcy of his great-uncle, Sir Merrick Burrell, in 1787, and was created Baron Gwydir in 1796. He married Lady Priscilla Barbara Elizabeth Bertie in 1779. Wraxall is not strictly correct as to the Christian name of this lady. Lord Gwydir died 9th June 1820.—ED.

the Hobarts under George II., and the Conynghams at a very recent period. Nor did it arise from pre-eminent parliamentary abilities combined with eloquence, such as enabled Pulteney and Pitt, disdain-ing all gradations, and trampling on obstacles, to seize at once on earldoms as their birthright. Neither was it the reward of long, patient, supple, laborious, official talents and services, by which, in our time, Jenkinson, Eden, Dundas, and Vansittart were carried up to the House of Lords. Mr. Burrell, who was destitute of any profession, could not open to himself the doors of that assembly by legal knowledge, or by resplendent achievements performed on either element of the land or of the water. Lastly, he possessed no such overwhelming borough interest or landed property as could enable him at a propitious juncture, like Sir James Lowther, to dictate his pleasure to Ministers and to kings. The patrimonial inheritance of the Burrells was composed of a very small estate situate at Beckenham in Kent. In his figure, address, and advantages of person, accompanied with great elegance of deportment, might be said to consist the foundations of his elevation. But even these qualities or endowments, which effected his marriage with a daughter of the Duke of Ancaster, would not have advanced him beyond the rank of a commoner, if an event the most improbable, namely, the death of his brother-in-law, the young Duke, though cast by nature in an athletic mould, had not rendered his wife a peeress in her own right, vesting in her, at the same time, one of the greatest hereditary offices of the English monarchy. As little did his three sisters owe their elevation to extraordinary beauty, such as triumphed over all competition and surmounted every obstacle in the instance of the Gunnings. Never were any women, in fact, less endowed with uncommon attrac-

tions of external form than the three sisters just enumerated. Modest, amiable, virtuous, they were destitute of those fascinating graces which the fugitive of Philippi attempts to describe in their effects when he asks Lycé—

——“ Quid habes illius, illius  
Quæ spirabat amores,  
Quæ me surpuerat mihi ? ”

I will conclude this digression on the Burrells by adding one fact more, scarcely less remarkable than those already commemorated, namely, that the charms which nature had so sparingly bestowed on the three younger sisters, who married some of the greatest noblemen in Britain, were lavished on the eldest, who gave her hand to Mr. Bennett, a private gentleman. I have rarely seen and scarcely ever known a more captivating woman in every point of female attraction.

Sir Hugh Smithson, after having attained in his own person to the dukedom of Northumberland, which no man had reached since John Dudley, under Edward VI., accepted at this time from the Minister a barony,<sup>1</sup> with remainder to his youngest son, Lord Algernon Percy. He succeeded to it in 1786, on the Duke's demise, and four years later Pitt raised him to the earldom of Beverley. We have recently beheld the late Duke of Northumberland, treading in the traces of his predecessor, procure in like manner a peerage for his younger son ; <sup>2</sup> so exactly is human life and is history composed of nearly the same facts, performed under different names in successive periods. The King, who had held fast the key of the House of Lords during eight

<sup>1</sup> Lovaine.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Algernon, who was created Lord Prudhoe in 1816, when twenty-four years of age. He succeeded as fourth Duke of Northumberland in 1847, and died 12th February 1865.—ED.

months that the Coalition remained in power, now unlocked its doors; four earls and six barons being either admitted for the first time into that assembly, or raised to higher gradations of the peerage previous to the day fixed for the meeting of Parliament. Lord de Ferrars of Chartley, eldest son of Lord Townshend, became Earl of Leicester. He was a man of an improved mind, agreeable manners, licentious life, and entertaining conversation. No individual of eminence in my time was supposed to possess so much heraldic and genealogical information. Descended on both sides from a train of noble ancestors, he inherited, in right of his mother, no less than five baronies of the most ancient date, remounting to the close of the thirteenth century. Having asked his father's permission to be created Earl of Leicester previous to his acceptance of it, that nobleman replied, with his characteristic humour, "I have no objection to my son's taking any title except one, namely, Viscount Townshend." Three years afterwards, in 1787, Lord Townshend regained the precedence that he had lost, Pitt having raised him to the dignity of a marquis. In consequence of Lord de Ferrars' new creation, the Cokes of Holkham, in Norfolk, who, after the extinction of the Sydneys, had been elevated to the earldom of Leicester, became excluded from the hope of re-attaining that title, which had been worn by Plantagenets. Fox unquestionably intended to have conferred it on his friend and adherent, Mr. Coke, if the Coalition had remained in office.<sup>1</sup> Lord de Ferrars laid claim to it in virtue of his descent from Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester, the Cromwell of the thirteenth

<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Coke of Holkham was created Earl of Leicester in 1744. On his death in 1759 the earldom became extinct. In spite of Wraxall's remark, the Coke family again obtained the title in 1837. —ED.



century, who had nearly torn the sceptre from the feeble hands of Henry III.

Sir James Lowther received at the same time his recompense for having enabled the First Minister to enter the political arena, where, in less than three years, he had raised himself to the summit of power. Overleaping the two inferior stages of the peerage, as if beneath his claims, Sir James seated himself at once on the earls' bench by the title of Lonsdale,<sup>1</sup> an elevation which, it might have been thought, was in itself fully adequate to his pretensions and services. Yet, so indignant was he at finding himself last on the list of newly created earls—though the three noble individuals who preceded him were already barons of many centuries old—that he actually attempted to reject the peerage, preferring to remain a commoner rather than submit to so great a mortification. With that avowed intention he repaired to the House of Commons, where, in defiance of all impediments, he would have proceeded up the floor and placed himself on one of the Opposition benches as member for the county of Cumberland, if Colman and Clementson, the serjeant and deputy-serjeant at arms, had not withheld him by main force.<sup>2</sup> Apprised of his determination, and aware of his having already kissed the King's hand at the levée on his being raised to the earldom, though the patent had not yet passed through the necessary forms for its completion, they grasped the hilts of their swords, restrained him from accomplishing his purpose, and at length succeeded in

<sup>1</sup> He died 24th May 1802, and was succeeded as Viscount Lowther by the eldest son of his deceased third cousin, Sir William Lowther, the earldom of Lonsdale becoming extinct. Viscount Lowther was created Earl of Lonsdale in 1807.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Lowther was not then a member of Parliament, the Parliament in which he was member for Cumberland having been dissolved in March 1784. The scene thus graphically described could not therefore have occurred.—ED.

obliging him to seat himself under the gallery, in the part of the House allotted to peers when present at the deliberations of the Commons. Means were subsequently devised to allay the irritation of his mind, and to induce his acquiescence in the order of precedence adopted by the Crown.

Such indeed were the eccentricities of Lord Lonsdale's conduct, not only on this occasion, but throughout life, as justly to call in question the sanity of his intellect. His fiery and overbearing temper combining with a fearless disposition, scarcely under the dominion of reason at all times, led him into perpetual quarrels, terminating frequently in duels;<sup>1</sup> for he never declined giving satisfaction, and frequently demanded it of others. Capricious, tyrannical, and sustained by an immense property, chiefly situate in the counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland,<sup>2</sup> he expended vast sums in election contests, where he was nevertheless sometimes successfully opposed by Lord Surrey, a man not less tenacious, active, and determined than himself. Lord Lonsdale regularly brought in from five or six up to eight members of Parliament,<sup>3</sup> among whom were three Lowthers; and he was known to exercise over his nominees an active superintendence.

When we consider these facts, in addition to the merit of having enabled Mr. Pitt to place his foot upon the ladder which conducted him so rapidly to the head of the Treasury, we cannot be surprised

<sup>1</sup> He fought a bloodless duel with Serjeant Bolton in April 1784, and in June 1792 one equally bloodless with Captain Cuthbert, whom he had grossly insulted on duty. He is said to have left an estate to his successor for acting as his second in a duel which no one else would do.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> He was known throughout Westmoreland and Cumberland as the "Bad Earl," and "Jimmy Graspall, Earl of Toadstool," was the sobriquet given him in the numerous election squibs.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> He frequently returned nine members, who were known as his "nine-pins."—ED.

that Sir James Lowther should have claimed and exacted a proportionate remuneration. Fox, who had gladly availed himself of so powerful an auxiliary in order to overturn Lord North, and who had stationed him in the front ranks during the session of 1782, no sooner beheld his translation to the Upper House by the Minister, than he made Lord Lonsdale feel the full weight of his displeasure. Early in the session of 1784, alluding to the contested election for Lancaster,—at which place it had been unsuccessfully attempted to bring in a Lowther, and where a scrutiny was demanded,—Fox inveighed in harsh terms against the newly created Earl, whom, without naming, he designated in colours too accurate to be mistaken. “If,” exclaimed he, “a scrutiny had been granted, no doubt every stratagem to procrastinate, every artifice to perplex, every invention to harass, would have been adopted. All the exertions that a temper not the mildest when victorious, nor, when vanquished, the most patient,—all that unbounded wealth in its wantonness could have exerted, we should have beheld.”

Destitute of issue, male or female, by his marriage into the house of Bute,—a match which was not productive of domestic felicity,<sup>1</sup>—he became attached in the decline of life to a lady whose death overwhelmed him with distress. As some consolation, he constructed a mausoleum for her remains at Paddington,<sup>2</sup> to which he often repaired; but he found more effectual relief in election pursuits, which occupied him down to the period of his own decease. That event happened not long before the dissolution of Parliament in 1802, for which crisis he was

<sup>1</sup> He married Margaret, daughter of John, Earl of Bute, 7th September 1761.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> He caused her body to be embalmed, and placed a glass over her features.—ED.

preparing all his pecuniary means. Above seven thousand guineas were found in his *cassette*, destined, as was not doubted, for those purposes : a vast sum to collect in gold at a time when, even at the Queen's commerce table, guineas were very rarely staked, and when specie could scarcely be procured even by men of the largest fortune.

[19th May 1784.]—On the first meeting of the House of Commons, the most careless observer who had sat in the preceding Parliament could not fail to perceive, on surveying the Opposition benches, how vast a diminution had taken place in that ardent, numerous, and devoted phalanx which lately surrounded Fox, and enabled him during so long a time to hold the Administration in fetters. Scarcely indeed had their leader himself been able to secure a seat in the new assembly. The uncertain issue of the Westminster election rendering it indispensable to procure his return for some other place before the close of April, Sir Thomas Dundas's exertions—not, however, without difficulty—brought him in as representative for the Orkney and Shetland Islands. Even there he met with an opponent in the person of Mr. Sinclair, since created Sir John Sinclair, and well known by his agricultural labours, who was chosen by the delegates of two out of the five boroughs in which resides the right of election.<sup>1</sup>

The refusal of the high bailiff to declare Fox one of the members returned for Westminster, though he had on the face of the poll an unquestionable majority, laid him under the necessity of taking his seat for that most remote portion of the British dominions, unless he submitted to remain excluded alto-

<sup>1</sup> In 1785, Mr. Sinclair, in his "History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire," led the way in asserting that the resources of the nation were sufficient for heavier difficulties than those by which it was then oppressed. He died in 1835, aged eighty.—ED.

gether from the deliberations of Parliament. Some, nevertheless, of his most steady adherents, who had surmounted the political tempest, "*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*," were beheld near him. At their head might be placed the Earl of Surrey, whom we have since seen during thirty years exhibiting a spectacle new to the House of Peers, namely, a Protestant<sup>1</sup> Duke of Norfolk taking an active part in all the legislative proceedings of that body. Nature, which cast him in her coarsest mould, had not bestowed on him any of the external insignia of high descent. His person, large, muscular, and clumsy, was destitute of grace or dignity, though he possessed much activity. He might indeed have been mistaken for a grazier or a butcher by his dress and appearance; but intelligence was marked in his features, which were likewise expressive of frankness and sincerity.

At a time when men of every description wore hair-powder and a queue, he had the courage to cut his hair short and to renounce powder, which he never used except when going to court. In the session of 1785 he proposed to Pitt to lay a tax on the use of hair-powder, as a substitute for one of the Minister's projected taxes on female servants. This hint, though not improved at the time, was adopted by him some years afterwards. Pitt, in reply to Lord Surrey, observed, that "the noble Lord, from his rank and the office which he held (Deputy Earl Marshal of England), might dispense, as he did, with powder, but there were many individuals whose situation compelled them to go powdered. Indeed, few gentlemen permitted their servants to appear before them unpowdered."

<sup>1</sup> Charles, the eleventh Duke, born in 1746, succeeded to the title in 1786, and died in 1815. His third cousin, Bernard Edward, was the twelfth Duke.—D.

Courtenay,<sup>1</sup> a man who despised all aid of dress, in the course of the same debate remarked that he was very disinterested in his opposition to the tax on maid-servants; "for," added he, "as I have seven children, the '*jus septem liberorum*' will exempt me from paying it; and I shall be as little affected by the tax on hair-powder, if it should take place, as the noble Lord who proposed it."

Strong natural sense supplied in Lord Surrey the neglect of education, and he displayed a sort of rude eloquence, whenever he rose to address the House, analogous to his formation of mind and body. In his youth—for at the time of which I speak he had attained his thirty-eighth year—he led a most licentious life, having frequently passed the whole night in excesses of every kind, and even lain down, when intoxicated, occasionally to sleep in the streets or on a block of wood. At the "Beef-steak Club,"<sup>2</sup> where I have dined with him, he seemed to be in his proper element. But few individuals of that society could sustain a contest with such an antagonist when the cloth was removed. In cleanliness he was negligent to so great a degree, that he rarely made use of water for purposes of bodily refreshment and comfort. He even carried the neglect of his person so far, that his servants were accustomed to avail themselves of his fits of intoxication for the purpose of washing him. On those occasions, being wholly insensible to all that passed about him, they stripped him as they would have done a corpse, and performed on his body the necessary ablutions. Nor did he change his linen more frequently than he

<sup>1</sup> Died 1816.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> More properly the "Sublime Society of Beefsteaks."

"And Norfolk's great Duke, who belonged to the breed  
Of the sturdy old Barons of famed Runnymede,  
In the same cause of freedom delighted to feed  
With the jolly old Steakers of England."—ED

washed himself. Complaining one day to Dudley North that he was a martyr to the rheumatism, and had ineffectually tried every remedy for its relief, "Pray, my Lord," said he, "did you ever try a clean shirt?"<sup>1</sup>

Drunkenness was in him an hereditary vice, transmitted down, probably, by his ancestors from the Plantagenet times, and inherent in his formation. His father, the Duke of Norfolk, indulged equally in it, but he did not manifest the same capacities as the son in resisting the effects of wine. It is a fact that Lord Surrey, after laying his father and all the guests under the table at the Thatched House Tavern in St. James's Street, has left the room, repaired to another festive party in the vicinity, and there recommenced the unfinished convivial rites, realising Thomson's description of the parson in his "Autumn," who, after the fox-chase, survives his company in the celebration of these orgies:—

"Perhaps some doctor of tremendous paunch,  
Awful and vast, a black abyss of drink,  
Outlives them all; and from his buried flock  
Returning late with rumination sad,  
Laments the weakness of these latter times."

Even in the House of Commons he was not always sober; but he never attempted, like Lord Galway, to mix in the debate on those occasions. No man, when master of himself, was more communicative, accessible, and free from any shadow of pride. Intoxication rendered him quarrelsome, though, as appeared in the course of more than one transaction, he did not manifest Lord Lonsdale's troublesome superabundance of courage after he had given offence. When under the dominion of wine, he has asserted that three as good Catholics sat in

<sup>1</sup> Canning said of him that there would be an improvement if there were "less of the hog and more of the bason."—ED.

Lord North's last Parliament as ever existed, namely, Lord Nugent, Sir Thomas Gascoyne, and himself. There might be truth in this declaration. Doubts were, indeed, always thrown on the sincerity of his own renunciation of the errors of the Romish Church, which act was attributed more to ambition, and the desire of performing a part in public life, or to irreligion, than to conviction. His very dress, which was most singular, and always the same, except when he went to St. James's, namely, a plain blue coat of a peculiar dye approaching to purple, was said to be imposed on him by his priest or confessor as a penance. The late Earl of Sandwich so assured me; but I always believed Lord Surrey to possess a mind superior to the terrors of superstition. Though twice married while a very young man, he left no issue by either of his wives. The second still survives in a state of disordered intellect, residing at Holme Lacy in the county of Hereford.<sup>1</sup>

As long ago as the spring of 1781, breakfasting with Lord Surrey at the Cocoa-tree Coffee-house, he assured me that he had purposed to give an entertainment when the year 1783 should arrive, in order to commemorate the period when the dukedom would have remained three hundred years in their house since its creation by Richard III. He added that it was his intention to invite all the individuals of both sexes whom he could ascertain to be lineally descended from the body of Jockey of Norfolk, the first Duke of that name, killed at Bosworth Field. "But having already," said he, "discovered nearly six thousand persons sprung from him, a great number of whom are in very obscure or indigent circumstances, and believing, as I do, that as many

<sup>1</sup> Frances Scudamore; she died in 1820. His first wife was Marian, only daughter and heiress of John Coppinger of Ballyvolan, co. Cork, who died in 1768.—ED.



more may be in existence, I have abandoned the design."

Fox could not boast of a more devoted supporter than Lord Surrey, nor did his attachment diminish with his augmentation of honours. On the contrary, after he became Duke of Norfolk he manifested the strongest proofs of adherence, some of which, however, tended to injure him in the estimation of all moderate men. His conduct in toasting "The sovereign majesty of the people," at a meeting of the Whigs held in February 1798 at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, was generally disapproved and censured. Assuredly it was not in the "Bill of Rights," nor in the principles on which reposes the Revolution of 1688, that the Duke could discover any mention of such an attribute of the people. Their liberties and franchises are there enumerated, but their majesty was neither recognised nor imagined by those persons who were foremost in expelling James II. The observations with which his Grace accompanied the toast relative to the two thousand persons who, under General Washington, first procured reform and liberty for the thirteen American colonies, were equally pernicious in themselves and seditious in their tendency. Such testimonies of approbation seemed, indeed, to be not very remote from treason. The Duke himself appeared conscious that he had advanced beyond the limits of prudence, if not beyond the duties imposed by his allegiance; for, a day or two afterwards, having heard that his behaviour had excited much indignation at St. James's, he waited on the Duke of York in order to explain and excuse the proceeding. When he had so done, he concluded by requesting, as a proof of his loyalty, that, in case of invasion, his regiment of militia (the West Riding of Yorkshire, which he commanded) might be assigned the post of danger.

His Royal Highness listened to him with apparent attention; assured him that his request should be laid before the King; and then breaking off the conversation abruptly, "Apropos, my Lord," said he, "have you seen 'Blue Beard?'" This musical pantomime entertainment, which had just made its appearance at Drury Lane Theatre, was at that time much admired.<sup>1</sup> Only two days subsequent to the above interview the Duke of Norfolk received his dismissal both from the Lord-Lieutenancy and from his regiment.

As he advanced in age he increased in bulk; and the last time that I saw him (which happened to be at the levée at Carlton House, when I had some conversation with him), not more than a year before his decease, such was his size and breadth, that he seemed incapable of passing through a door of ordinary dimensions. Yet he had neither lost the activity of his mind nor that of his body. Regardless of seasons or impediments of any kind, he traversed the kingdom in all directions, from Greystock in Cumberland to Holme Lacy and Arundel Castle, with the rapidity of a young man. Indeed, though of enormous proportions, he had not a projecting belly, as Ptolemy Physcon is depicted in antiquity, or like the late King of Wirtemberg, who resembled in his person our popular ideas of Punch, and might have asserted, with Falstaff, that "he was unable to get sight of his own knee." In the deliberations of the House of Peers the Duke of Norfolk maintained the manly independence of his character, and frequently spoke with ability as well as with information. His talents were neither impaired by years nor obscured by the bacchanalian

<sup>1</sup> It was hastily written by Colman as a substitute for a pantomime. Palmer enacted Blue Beard, and Mrs. Crouch and Miss De Camp (Mrs. Charles Kemble) were the Fatima and Irene.—D.

festivities of Norfolk House, which continued to the latest period of his life; but he became somnolent and lethargic before his decease. On the formation of Lord Liverpool's Administration in 1812, he might unquestionably have received the Garter, which the Regent tendered him, if he would have sanctioned and supported that Ministerial arrangement. The tenacity of his political principles made him, however, superior to the temptation. His death has left a blank in the Upper House of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

As Lord Surrey secured his own seat for Carlisle, so Sheridan surmounted all opposition at Stafford, and reappeared in the new House of Commons by Fox's side. He possessed a ductility and versatility of talents which no public man in our time has equalled; and these intellectual endowments were sustained by a suavity of temper that seemed to set at defiance all attempts to ruffle or discompose it. Playing with his irritable or angry antagonist, Sheridan exposed him by sallies of wit or attacked him with classic elegance of satire, performing this arduous task in the face of a crowded assembly without losing for an instant either his presence of mind, his facility of expression, or his good-humour. He wounded deepest, indeed, when he smiled, and convulsed his hearers with laughter while the object of his ridicule or animadversion was twisting under the lash. Pitt and Dundas, who presented the fairest marks for his attack, found by experience, that though they might repel, they could not confound, and still less could they silence or vanquish him. In every attempt that they made, by introducing personalities or illiberal reflections on his private life and literary or dramatic occupations, to disconcert

<sup>1</sup> He succeeded his father as eleventh Duke of Norfolk in 1786, and died 16th December 1815.—ED.

him, he turned their weapons on themselves. Nor did he, while thus chastising his adversary, alter a muscle of his own countenance, which, as well as his gestures, seemed to participate and display the unalterable serenity of his intellectual formation. Rarely did he elevate his voice, and never except in subservience to the dictates of his judgment, with the view to produce a corresponding effect on his audience. Yet he was always heard, generally listened to with eagerness, and could obtain a hearing at almost any hour. Burke, who wanted Sheridan's nice tact and his amenity of manner, was continually coughed down, and on those occasions he lost his temper. Even Fox often tired the House by the repetitions which he introduced into his speeches. Sheridan never abused their patience. Whenever he rose, they anticipated a rich repast of wit without acrimony, seasoned by allusions and citations the most delicate, yet obvious in their application.

At this period of his life, when he was not more than thirty-three years of age, his countenance and features had in them something peculiarly pleasing, indicative at once of intellect, humour, and gaiety. All these characteristics played about his lips when speaking, and operated with inconceivable attraction; for they anticipated, as it were, to the eye, the effect produced by his oratory on the ear, thus opening for him a sure way to the heart or the understanding. Even the tones of his voice, which were singularly mellifluous, aided the general effect of his eloquence; nor was it accompanied by Burke's unpleasant Irish accent. Pitt's enunciation was unquestionably more imposing, dignified, and sonorous. Fox displayed more argument as well as vehemence; Burke possessed more fancy and enthusiasm; but Sheridan won his way by a sort of fascination. At

thirty-three, it might be said of his aspect, as Milton does of the fallen angel's form—

“——His face had not yet lost  
All her original brightness.”

Excesses of wine had not degraded its lineaments, eclipsed its fine expression, covered him with disgusting eruptions, and obtained for him the dramatic nickname of *Bardolph*. At sixty he reminded me of one of the companions of Ulysses, who having tasted of Circe's “charmed cup,” instantly

“——lost his upright shape,  
And downward fell into a grov'ling swine.”<sup>1</sup>

Those persons, and those only, who have frequently seen Sheridan at the two different periods to which I allude, can form an adequate conception of the metamorphosis produced in his appearance by repeated and habitual intoxication. It would have been fortunate for his fame if Horace's invocation to the God of Verse to grant him—

“——nec turpem senectam  
Degere, nec cithara carentem,”

had been accomplished in Sheridan.

If we duly appreciate the impediments with which he, no less than Burke, had to struggle, arising from want of distinguished birth, connections, and fortune, when entering the House of Commons, we shall admit that transcendent talents were necessary to vanquish such obstacles. Pitt and Fox had comparatively none with which to contend on commencing their parliamentary career. Sheridan, before he was first elected member for Stafford in 1780, had indeed attained the heights of dramatic celebrity, and already, in the opinion of many, rivalled Congreve. I never have, I own, so thought; nor do I consider him as entitled to

<sup>1</sup> Sheridan died in 1816, in the sixty-fifth year of his age.—ED.

dispute precedence with the author of "The Way of the World" and of "Love for Love." Sheridan's "Duenna," and still more his "School for Scandal," are both unquestionably charming productions; nor does "The Critic" excite less admiration; but they, nevertheless, fall below the comedies of Congreve in brilliancy of wit and strength of composition, though they may possess more stage effect. The plays of Sheridan are likewise free from the licentiousness of Congreve: that defect was, however, the fault of the age, not of the author. Prior, and even Pope, are liable to the same imputation, and so are Vanbrugh and Centlivre; but the facts only prove that our manners under George III. are much more refined and correct than they were during the reigns of Anne and George I.

After Sheridan's entrance on the field of politics and Parliament, he abandoned the comic muse—a circumstance greatly to be regretted. Perhaps, if Shakespeare or Milton had been so unfortunate as to attain a seat in the Legislature, we might never have witnessed "Hamlet" and "Othello;" nor should we have boasted of an epic poem that justly ranks with the "Iliad" and the "Æneid." Lord Byron, beyond all comparison the first poet of the present age, has purchased his "Parnassian laurels" by the sacrifice or dereliction of his legislative and parliamentary duties. Sheridan combined in himself the talents of Terence and of Cicero, the powers of Demosthenes and of Menander. In the capital of Great Britain, on one and the same day, he has spoken for several hours in Westminster Hall, during the course of Hastings' trial, to a most brilliant and highly informed audience of both sexes, in a manner so impressive, no less than eloquent, as to extort admiration even from his greatest enemies. Then repairing to the House

of Commons, he has exhibited specimens of oratory before that assembly equalling those which he had displayed in the morning when addressing the peers as one of Hastings' accusers; while on the same evening "The Duenna" has been performed at one theatre and "The School for Scandal" at the other to crowded audiences, who received them with unbounded applause.<sup>1</sup> This is a species of double triumph, of the tongue and of the pen, to which antiquity, Athenian or Roman, can lay no claim, and which has not any parallel in our own history. Lord Bolingbroke may perhaps form the nearest approach, as he was both an orator and a writer. So was Burke. Fox himself, after a life passed in the House of Commons, aspired to instruct and to delight by his compositions. But not one of the three can sustain a comparison with Sheridan, who may be considered, in a comprehensive view, as the most highly endowed man whom we have beheld in our time.

In various points of useful or ornamental knowledge he nevertheless fell far below Fox, who had visited the Continent, and was conversant in the languages as well as in the literary productions of Italy and France; while Sheridan, though a good classic scholar, had never set his foot out of the British dominions, except once during a few weeks, and was a very imperfect master of the French tongue. He neither spoke nor wrote it with any ease, and hardly could be said to read it without difficulty. His personal courage was indisputable, and almost romantic, for he literally obtained the

<sup>1</sup> "Sheridan did not exhibit those high specimens of senatorial oratory on one and the same day that he had delighted and astonished Westminster Hall, nor was 'The School for Scandal' nor 'The Duenna' played at the rival theatres on any of the three nights."—(*Quarterly Review*, vol. lvii. p. 479.)—Ed.

hand of Miss Linley by the sword. She was denominated "The Maid of Bath," and had a train of admirers. His two duels with Mr. Matthews, of which she formed the object, exhibited on both sides the utmost violence of animosity. Though Sheridan won her with so much difficulty, his attachment to her was not permanent; and very heavy clouds overcast the evening of her life, under the pressure of which she sunk into the grave. I will not disturb her ashes. They repose in the Cathedral of Wells, while her husband lies in Poets' Corner. Sheridan soon consoled himself for her loss in the arms of a second wife.<sup>1</sup> The invincible spirit which he exhibited as a lover he would unquestionably have displayed in his parliamentary capacity, had the occasion ever demanded it. But with such consummate dexterity did he conduct himself as a member of the House of Commons, that he never was compelled to give or to demand satisfaction, though he sat there above thirty years. Lord George Germain, Lord Shelburne, Pitt, Fox, Tierney, Adam, Fullerton, Governor Johnstone, and many other leading men of both sides, were obliged to draw the trigger.<sup>2</sup> Sheridan's calmness, good-humour, and wit disarmed his adversary, without the necessity of accompanying him to the field. Pitt's proud and sullen inflexibility usually rendered him incapable of repairing an affront or of offering any apology. Burke in his anger was impracticable and unpersuadable; but, I believe, he would not have accepted a challenge, where the offence had been given in his place as a member of the House. He would either have treated

<sup>1</sup> Esther Jane Ogle, daughter of Dr. Ogle, Dean of Winchester. The first Mrs. Sheridan died on June 28, 1792, and this second marriage took place in the spring of 1795.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Fox was wounded by Adam, 30th November 1779; Colonel Fullerton wounded Lord Shelburne, 22d March 1780; Pitt's duel with Tierney took place on the 27th May 1796. To these might have been added Canning's duel with Castlereagh, 22d September 1809.—ED.



it with contempt, or he would have claimed the protection of the Speaker. Throughout his whole political life, Sheridan manifested, in my opinion, much more real public spirit and love of his country than was shown by Fox. Of this sentiment he exhibited a splendid instance, which ought to render his memory dear to every Englishman, during the memorable mutiny that took place in the navy in the year 1797, one of the most awful and appalling events which occurred under the reign of George III. Horne Tooke was so elated by it, that on receiving the intelligence he exultingly exclaimed, "The revolution is begun; stop it who can!" Parker, like Massaniello, seemed, for a few days, to give law from Deptford to the mouth of the Thames; but the career of the Neapolitan fisherman and of the English mutineer were alike short, as well as tragical in their termination. Dismissing all party feelings, and impelled by more noble motives of action, Sheridan then gave the warmest support to Government. Pitt did not, however, receive his advances nor accept his magnanimous aid with the liberality of mind or with the testimonies of goodwill and respect merited by such a conduct. Dundas, who possessed a more conciliating temper as well as a more accommodating disposition, ventured, as I have been assured from good authority, to reproach his friend, in the freedom of private conversation at Wimbledon, for such a repulsive treatment of the man who in a moment of general dismay proffered his assistance to the Administration.

It cannot admit of a doubt that if Sheridan had brought his abilities into the market, and, like Dundas, had exclaimed "Wha wants me?" or if, like Edén, he had quitted his party, made his bargain, and gone over to Pitt, endowed as he was with such various talents, he must have gladly been

received into the Ministerial ranks. Or if, after the French Revolution, he had imitated Burke, Sir Gilbert Elliott, Wellbore Ellis, Powis, Windham, and so many others, on whom pensions, employments, and peerages were bestowed, he might have named his price. But whatever severity of censure his private life and actions may justly excite, his parliamentary line of conduct stands exempt from all reproach. Invariably attached to Fox, even when his judgment or his inclinations might perhaps have leaned another way, he accompanied that statesman in his fall, continuing steadily, however hopeless the contest might be, to combat by Fox's side during more than two-and-twenty years, from December 1783 down to February 1806. Yet there is good reason to believe that Sheridan deprecated, from the beginning, the too great energy, or rather the spirit of confiscation and ambition, which characterised the East India Bill, to which imprudent measure the Coalition fell victims. In like manner, though he shared the fate which Lords Grenville and Grey attracted on themselves in 1807 by the generous but ill-timed and dictatorial attempt at Catholic emancipation, yet he had too much knowledge of George III.'s character and fixed principles or prejudices, not to dread the result of trying to force that prince's conscience. With equal humour and truth he observed, that "he had frequently heard of men running their heads against a stone wall; but he believed his friends formed the only instance to be found in history of Ministers who first built a wall, and then ran their heads against it." On the other hand, so defective was Sheridan's morality as a man, such were his known pecuniary difficulties, and so unjustifiable were the expedients that he devised and put into practice for his daily support, as almost to incapacitate him thereby

from ever ascending to the eminences of the state. Prior, who lived with Lord Bolingbroke when he was Secretary of State, and with the Earl of Oxford at the time that he was Lord Treasurer, in the same intimate friendship as Sheridan did with Fox, was sent by that Administration to Paris to negotiate, as plenipotentiary, the Treaty of Utrecht. In the following reign, Addison, though altogether unfit for the office, rose to be Secretary of State. But the King would no more have consented to name Sheridan his Minister for discussing the conditions of the Peace of Amiens, or have appointed him Secretary for the Home Department, than Queen Anne could be induced to nominate Swift to a bishopric. It was not merely Sheridan's want of fortune, for, in fact, neither Pitt nor Fox had any patrimonial inheritance remaining when they respectively occupied the highest employments. Dundas stood nearly in a similar predicament. But even Fox, though he had ruined himself at play, yet never had recourse to dishonourable means of raising pecuniary supplies for his subsistence. Sheridan's whole life formed a tissue of inventions and subterfuges, as manager of Drury Lane Theatre or of the Opera House, to evade payment of salaries to the performers and to elude the demands of his creditors. The tricks of Scapin could not boast of more originality or ingenuity than did those of Sheridan. They were current in every company, and would of themselves fill a volume.

One of the first objects meditated by Fox's party, after Sheridan's entrance into the House of Commons in September 1780, was to procure, at all events, his election as a member of Brookes's Club. But his success at Stafford met with fewer obstacles than he had to encounter in St. James's Street, where various individuals of that society, impelled

either by political or by personal antipathies, were resolute in their determination to exclude him. Among these, two held him in peculiar dislike: I mean George Selwyn and the late Earl of Besborough.<sup>1</sup> Conscious that every exertion would be made to ensure Sheridan's success, they agreed not to absent themselves during the time allotted by the regulations of the club for ballots; and as one black ball sufficed to extinguish the hopes of a candidate, they repeatedly prevented his election. In order to remove so serious an impediment, Sheridan's friends had recourse to artifice. Having fixed on the evening when it was resolved to put him up, and finding his two inveterate adversaries posted as usual, a chairman was sent with a note, written in the name of Lady Duncannon to her father-in-law, acquainting him that a fire had broken out in his house in Cavendish Square, and entreating him immediately to return home. Unsuspicious of any trick, as his son and daughter-in-law lived under his roof, Lord Besborough, without hesitating an instant, quitted the room and got into a sedan-chair. Selwyn, who resided in the vicinity of Brookes's, in Cleveland Row,<sup>2</sup> received nearly at the same time a verbal message to request his presence; Miss Fagniani (whom he had adopted as his daughter, and who afterwards married the Earl of Yarmouth<sup>3</sup>) being suddenly seized with an alarming indisposition. This summons he obeyed; and no sooner was the room cleared, than Sheridan being proposed as a member, a ballot took place, when he was unanimously chosen. Lord Besborough and Selwyn returned without delay, on discovering the imposi-

<sup>1</sup> William, the third Earl: he was born in 1739 and died in 1793.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> He died there in 1791, aged seventy-two.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> Succeeded his father as Marquis of Hertford in 1822. He married Miss Fagniani in 1798.—ED.

tion that had been practised on their credulity ; but too late to prevent its effect.

Few men of genius since Sir Richard Steele's time have undergone greater difficulties, and none have had recourse to more extraordinary modes for the purpose of raising money or obtaining credit than Sheridan. Some were so ludicrous as to excite mirth, and can hardly obtain belief. He resided during several years in Bruton Street, Berkeley Square, where the house was frequently so beset with duns or bailiffs, that even the provisions requisite for his family were introduced over the iron railing down the area. In the course of the year 1786, while living there, he entertained at dinner a number of the Opposition leaders, though he laboured at that time under almost insurmountable pecuniary embarrassments. All his plate, as well as his books, were lodged in pawn. Having, nevertheless, procured from the pawnbroker an assurance of the liberation of his plate for the day, he applied to Beckett, the celebrated bookseller in Pall Mall, to fill his empty bookcases. Beckett not only agreed to the proposition, but promised to ornament the vacant shelves with some of the most expensive and splendid productions of the British press, provided that two men, expressly sent for the purpose by himself, should be present to superintend their immediate restoration. It was settled finally that these librarians of Beckett's appointment should put on liveries for the occasion and wait at table. The company having assembled, were shown into an apartment, where the bookcases being opened for the purpose, they had leisure, before dinner was served, to admire the elegance of Sheridan's literary taste, and the magnificence of his collection. But, as all machinery is liable to accidents, so in this instance a failure had nearly taken place, which must

have proved fatal to the entertainment. When everything was ready for serving the dinner, it happened that, either from the pawnbroker's distrust, or from some unforeseen delay on his part, the spoons and forks had not arrived. Repeated messages were dispatched to hasten them, and they at last made their appearance ; but so critically and so late, that there not being time left to clean them, they were thrown into hot water, wiped, and instantly laid on the table. The evening then passed in the most joyous and festive manner. Beckett himself related these circumstances to Sir John Macpherson.

Some years later, Sheridan joined in a partnership with two ladies of the highest distinction, but whom I will not name, for the purpose of making purchases and sales, vulgarly called dabbling, in the public funds. The speculation proved most unfortunate, as they *waddled*, and became *lame ducks*. Nor was the bankruptcy of the firm the only evil that followed this experiment : but the subject is too delicate to allow the disclosure of farther particulars.

Besides the defect of moral principle, aggravated by the want of economy, Sheridan laboured under other disabilities, which obscured the lustre of his great attainments. He possessed or exerted no powers of steady and systematic application, such as, properly directed, might have alleviated the privations imposed on him by his political attachments. How little he cultivated the comic muse is evident from reflecting that, after he came into Parliament in 1780 down to his decease in 1816, he never composed a single dramatic piece. His alteration of Kotzebue's "*Pizarro*,"<sup>1</sup> and its adapta-

<sup>1</sup> John Kemble was the original Rolla (Drury Lane, 1799). It is singular that, of all the characters which he originally represented, only those of a melodramatic quality keep the stage, namely, Rolla,

tion to the English theatre, was less a work of genius than a financial expedient for attracting crowds to Drury Lane, made in his capacity of manager. Yet in the exertions of his own intellect he must have found a far more profitable and certain source of pecuniary supply than from the precarious emoluments or employments which he occasionally derived by the elevation of his friends to power. In fact, during the course of his whole life he never was above two years in office, taken all together; the first time in 1782, when on Lord North's resignation he became one of the Under Secretaries of State in Fox's department for eleven weeks. Under the Coalition Administration he was appointed a Secretary of the Treasury during about eight months, and when Fox, Lord Grenville, and Lord Grey came into power, they remunerated him by the lucrative post of Treasurer of the Navy, which he filled scarcely a year. The situation of Receiver-General of the Duchy of Cornwall, conferred on him by the Prince of Wales towards the evening of Sheridan's life, constituted the only permanent official recompense that he obtained for his long parliamentary services.

Indolence pervaded all his faculties, obscured, and finally extinguished them in a certain degree. It is a fact that when "Pizarro" was announced for representation on the theatre, he had not completed the alterations introduced into the piece. Even on the very evening that it was first performed, the concluding lines remained unfinished. Sheridan wrote them at the Shakespeare Tavern in Covent Garden not half an hour before the curtain drew up and the play commenced. The actors received and learned them before the ink was dry with

Octavian, Sir Edward Mortimer, Penruddock, and Reuben Glenroy.—D.

which they were composed. So inattentive was he even to his own interests, and with such difficulty could he be compelled to exert his talents! He could, indeed, occasionally bend the force of his powerful mind for a limited time to one object, as he did in Hastings' case, when he attracted such universal admiration. Nor did he ever, as a member of the House of Commons, betray want of information on whatever subject he spoke; but these were in general short and desultory efforts, not long-continued or laborious operations. The fame of Sheridan resulted from a happy combination of wit, eloquence, temper, and genius; not from sedulous application. He had not learned—

“To scorn delights and live laborious days,”

without which renunciations lasting reputation of any kind is not commonly acquired. Like “the great Emathian conqueror,” who abandoned himself to excesses—

“Theme of the young and beacon of the wise,”

Sheridan may rather be considered as a dazzling and seductive meteor, setting ultimately in darkness, than as a steady luminary dispensing an equal light, and whose departing rays, if less brilliant than in his meridian strength, might have been nevertheless cheering and unclouded.

This extraordinary man, as he approached the confines of old age, sunk with every successive year in general estimation. Admitting that his faculties remained perfect, as I believe they did, they nevertheless became overcast from the effects of intoxication, licentiousness, and habits of dissipation. How different, we must own, was the tenor of Fox's life after the period of his retreat to St. Anne's Hill!



Divided during many months of the year between rustic occupations, elegant literature, and the company of a few friends, Fox (a green apron frequently fastened round his waist) amused and employed himself in pruning or nailing up his own fruit-trees. But Fox outlived his vices; those of Sheridan accompanied him to the tomb. Such was the characteristic and inherent difference between these two illustrious men.

The last time I was in Sheridan's society, we dined together at the late Duke of Queensberry's in 1807. We formed a small select company, and he displayed his usual convivial talents, which never forsook him at table; but the Duke, who was above eighty<sup>1</sup> and had become deaf, did not allow Sheridan to sit long enough or to swallow sufficient wine for fully expanding his powers of colloquial entertainment.

At the dissolution of Parliament in 1812, having failed to secure his re-election at Stafford, he ceased to sit in the House of Commons—a circumstance most inconvenient to him, as his person was no longer protected from arrest while his debts accumulated. I have been assured from good authority that the Prince of Wales (or more properly to speak, the Regent) transmitted him the sum of £3000, in order to enable him to procure his election for some other borough;<sup>2</sup> but Sheridan, pressed by domestic exigencies, diverted the money to his own private necessities. From that period during the four or five concluding years of his life, he

<sup>1</sup> In 1807 "Old Q" was seventy-seven years of age. In the balcony of 138 Piccadilly he used to sit, "a thin, old, withered figure," says Leigh Hunt, who had seen him winking at the women who passed below. He was "a voluptuary and a millionaire."—D.

<sup>2</sup> Moore says that the Prince Regent offered to bring him into Parliament, but Sheridan declined the offer. See *Life of Sheridan*, vol. ii. p. 437.—ED.

who had so long attracted the attention of an admiring public insensibly became, if I may so express myself, half-eclipsed and in a manner forgotten while still alive. Incapable of extricating himself by any efforts of genius or application (such was his habitual indolence) from his pecuniary embarrassments, he could no longer defy a host of importunate tradesmen who clamorously demanded payment. Like Jaffier, he might say that his doors were—

“Barred and dammed up by gaping creditors.”

A friend of mine, a young man, having been arrested in August 1815 for a debt, and carried to a spunging-house in Fetter Lane, there found himself detained in a large apartment with Sheridan and Sir Watkin Lewes.<sup>1</sup> The latter had been Lord Mayor of London, as well as one of the members for that city in successive Parliaments. They remained shut up together for three days, at the end of which time Sheridan procured his liberation. He was morose, taciturn, and gloomy before dinner—for they all ate and slept in the same room—but when he had drunk nearly two bottles of wine, as he regularly did after dinner, he became comparatively cheerful and communicative. Sir Watkin, at near fourscore, exhibited equal good-humour and equanimity of mind.

Declining gradually under the attack of chronic diseases aggravated by excess, Sheridan's last scene holds up an affecting and painful subject of contemplation. A privy councillor, the ornament of his age and nation, caressed by princes and dreaded

<sup>1</sup> Sir Watkin was a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, and M.A. of that University. He was Lord Mayor in 1780, and during his mayoralty the Lords of the Admiralty sent a pressgang into the City. Lewes thereupon arrested the officers and committed them to Newgate.—ED.

by Ministers, whose orations and whose dramatic works rank him among the most distinguished men of his own or of any period, expired, though not in a state of destitution like Spenser, like Otway, or like Chatterton, yet under humiliating circumstances of pecuniary embarrassment. His house in Saville Row<sup>1</sup> was besieged by bailiffs, one of whom pressing to obtain entrance, and availing himself of the moment when the front door was opened by a servant in order to admit the visit of Dr. Baillie, who attended Sheridan during the progress of his last illness, that eminent physician, assisted by the footman, repulsed him, and shut the door in his face.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Baillie, I have been assured, refused to accept any fee for his advice, and Earl Grey, who had so long acted in political union with Sheridan as a member of Opposition, supplied him with every article for his comfort, prepared from his own kitchen. Nor, as I have heard, did the Regent forsake him in his last moments. If my information is correct, his Royal Highness sent him £200, but Sheridan declined its acceptance, and returned the money.

Thus breathed his last a man of whom it might be justly said, as of Lord Verulam, that he was—

“The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind.”

As Sheridan had secured his seat for Stafford in the new Parliament, so Burke had been returned by Earl Fitzwilliam for Malton, and Colonel Fitzpatrick, by the Duke of Bedford's interest, for Tavistock. Sawbridge with great difficulty came in again for London, last of the four successful candidates on the poll. The Hon. St. Andrew St. John, who had

<sup>1</sup> No. 17. He had previously resided at No. 14.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Sheridan wrote to Rogers on the 15th May 1816, six weeks before his death, “They are going to put the carpets out of the window and break into Mrs. S.'s room and take me; for God's sake let me see you.” Rogers gave him £150 to relieve his necessities.—ED.

been one of the two Under Secretaries of State in Fox's office, and who might be ranked among the most devoted adherents of the late Secretary, carried his election for the county of Bedford against Lord Ongley by only one vote, and Mr. St. John finally retained his seat. He has since succeeded to the ancient peerage of that name.<sup>1</sup> Hare<sup>2</sup> was again chosen, or, more properly to speak, returned for Knaresborough with Lord Duncannon.

Not one among Fox's friends and companions was supposed to possess more wit than Hare, but his talents, brilliant as they were, did not qualify him to take a part in debate, however highly estimated they might be at a festive meeting or in private society. Hare was, I believe, like myself, a native of Bristol, and, as I have been assured, of obscure origin. His accomplishments enabled him, however, to ally himself in marriage with a sister of Sir Abraham Hume, who brought him a very considerable fortune.

Lord Robert Spencer, not less warmly attached to Fox than Hare, reappeared in the House, and, as if to supply by ability the numerical vacancies occasioned among the Opposition ranks by the late dissolution, a new member, Mr. Windham, took his seat for the city of Norwich, after sustaining a long as well as a severe contest. His parliamentary talents, which soon rendered him distinguished, eventually raised him to some of the highest offices of the executive Government.

The first act of the House being the election of a

<sup>1</sup> St. Andrew St. John, second son of the eleventh Baron St. John, born 22d August 1759. He succeeded his brother as thirteenth baron in 1805 and died 15th October 1817.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Hare first took his seat for Knaresborough in 1781, succeeding the Hon. Robert Boyle Walsingham, lost on board the "Thunderer," 74 guns, which went down with eleven other men-of-war in the same storm in the West Indies, October 1780.—D.

Speaker, Cornwall was a second time raised to that eminent office. His alliance by marriage with Jenkinson constituted his best recommendation to the chair, of which seat the "Rolliad" says—

"There Cornwall sits, and oh ! unhappy fate !  
Must sit for ever through the long debate."

"Like sad Prometheus fastened to his rock,  
In vain he looks for pity to the clock.  
In vain the effects of strength'ning porter tries,  
And nods to Bellamy for fresh supplies."

Those persons who, like myself, sat in the House of Commons under Cornwall's Speakership, will recollect and acknowledge the fidelity of this portrait. One of the Lords of the new Treasury, the Marquis of Graham, moved that the late Speaker should be again placed in the chair. Few individuals, however distinguished by birth, talents, parliamentary interest, or public services, have attained to more splendid employments or have arrived at greater honours than Lord Graham under the reign of George III. Besides enjoying the lucrative sinecure of Justice-General of Scotland for life, we have seen him occupy a place in the Cabinet while he was Joint-Postmaster-General during Pitt's second ill-fated Administration. At the hour that I am writing, the Duke of Montrose, after having been many years decorated with the insignia of the Thistle, is invested with the order of the Garter, in addition to the high post which he holds of Master of the Horse. In his person he was elegant and pleasing, as far as those qualities depend on symmetry of external figure, nor was he deficient in all the accomplishments befitting his illustrious descent. He possessed a ready elocution, sustained by all the confidence in himself necessary for addressing the House. Nor did he want ideas, while he confined

himself to common sense, to argument, and to matters of fact.

If, however, he possessed no distinguished talents, he displayed various qualities calculated to compensate for the want of great ability; particularly the prudence, sagacity, and attention to his own interests so characteristic of the Caledonian people. His celebrated ancestor, the Marquis of Montrose, scarcely exhibited more devotion to the cause of Charles I. in the field, than his descendant displayed for George III. in the House of Commons. Nor did he want great energy, as well as activity, of mind and body. During the progress of the French Revolution, when the fabric of our constitution was menaced by internal and external attacks, Lord Graham, then become Duke of Montrose,<sup>1</sup> enrolled himself as a private soldier in the City Light Horse. During several successive years he did duty in that capacity night and day, sacrificing to it his ease and his time; thus holding out an example worthy imitation to the British nobility. His services were amply rewarded by Pitt.

After Mr. Perceval's assassination in 1812, when the Prince Regent attempted to form a junction between some of his own former friends and Lord Liverpool, the Duke of Montrose owed both the preservation of his place and the order of the Garter solely to the inflexibility of the individuals who refused those gratifications. If the Earl of Jersey would have accepted the Mastership of the Horse, the Duke would have been instantly deprived of that employment; as, in like manner, the Duke of Norfolk's rejection of the Garter deter-

<sup>1</sup> He succeeded to the title on the death of his father, the second Duke, in 1790.—ED.

mined the Regent, after long hesitation, to confer it on the Duke of Montrose.

[19th—24th May 1784.] The chiefs of Opposition, conscious that, in the diminished state of their numbers, they could not attempt to propose any candidate for the chair who would have had the slightest prospect of success, acquiesced without a division in Cornwall's election. But Fox did not lose the occasion of commenting with indignant severity on the conduct of the high bailiff of Westminster; observing, not without reason, that the House, which ought to have consisted of 558 members, was incomplete, none being returned for the city which had elected him as one of its representatives. He added, that if the returning officer at Rye, for which borough Mr. Cornwall sat in Parliament, had imitated the example of Corbett, the House could not have called that gentleman to the chair. This subject was again renewed a few days later, when Lee, who had filled the office of Attorney-General under the Coalition, moved that "the high bailiff ought to have returned two citizens for Westminster." It must be confessed that if reason and justice had decided the question, it would have been determined in the affirmative; but after a debate of considerable length, Ministers evaded rather than negatived the proposition, by a majority of only ninety-seven, the respective numbers being 233 and 136; at the same time commanding the attendance of Corbett at the bar of the House on the ensuing day. No sooner had this division taken place, which sufficiently manifested Pitt's ascendant in the assembly, than Mr. John James Hamilton rose to move an address of thanks to the King on his speech from the throne. Like the Duke of Montrose, he has occupied a distinguished place in the court of George III.,

as well as under Pitt's Administration. He had attained at this time his thirty-fourth year. Tall, erect, and muscular in his figure; thin, yet not meagre; finely formed, with an air of grace and dignity diffused over his whole person, he could not be mistaken for an ordinary man.<sup>1</sup> To the beautiful portrait of James V. in Duke Hamilton's apartments at Holyrood House he bore a striking similarity. Of a dark complexion, with very intelligent and regular features, he resembled more a Spaniard than a native of Britain; and his arrogant solemnity of manner, augmented by the peculiarities of his demeanour, obtained for him from Sheridan the name of "Don Whiskerandos," the lover of Tilburina in his own "Critic." Mr. Hamilton's abilities, though not of the first order, might have qualified him for public employment at least as well as those of the Duke of Montrose, if he had emulated to attain office; but pleasure rather than business, enjoyment and not application or renunciations, seemed principally to occupy his mind. Even when moving the address to the crown, his partiality towards the First Lord of the Treasury and his aversion to the Opposition leader manifested itself in a manner scarcely compatible either with the rules of debate or with the forms of decorum. After portraying Pitt in colours such as friendship lends to embellish truth, he, without positively naming Fox, designated him as "one of those men who, having dissipated their fortune, impaired their constitution, and prostituted their talents, entered the House of Commons for the purpose of repairing their ruined finances, from motives of personal ambition and self-interest." Contrasting

<sup>1</sup> He broke both his legs from jumping out of a phaeton at his seat, The Priory, Stanmore, in 1808. Lord Abercorn was nicknamed "Blue Beard."—ED.



the two individuals, he drew the most favourable conclusions for the former, as a Minister endowed, even in youth, with all the qualities necessary for promoting the grandeur and felicity of his native country.

Mr. Hamilton then stood in the relation of presumptive heir to the titles and vast estates of his uncle, the Earl of Abercorn, one of the sixteen representative Scottish peers. This nobleman, far advanced in life, infirm, paralytic, and unmarried, was raised about two years afterwards to the dignity of a British viscount, with remainder to his nephew, who succeeded in 1789 to all his honours and possessions. Hamilton, who had been early married, was already the father of a numerous family; but having conceived an ardent passion for a very near relative, Miss Cecil Hamilton, he applied to his friend the Minister in order to procure for her from the sovereign the rank and precedence of an Earl's daughter. This extraordinary request Pitt undertook, and finally accomplished. She was the youngest female child of the Rev. Dr. George Hamilton, uncle to the new Earl; and besides youth, possessed uncommon personal attractions. Nevertheless, such a concession on the part of the King seemed to militate against all the forms and usages of court etiquette, as she had four elder sisters. Charles II. himself might have hesitated at such a proposition. Nor could a prince so religious as George III., or a queen so correct as Charlotte of Mecklenburg, fail to perceive and to disapprove the motive which impelled Lord Abercorn to make the demand. It is well known that Pitt did not succeed in obtaining it without strong marks of repugnance being evinced by their Majesties. She was, nevertheless, presented at St. James's as Lady Cecil Hamil-

ton; and little more than two years afterwards, Lord Abercorn, who had intermediately become a widower, gave her his hand in marriage. But mutual infelicity soon produced a separation and a divorce. The whole transaction, which might furnish matter for the drama, excited not less general astonishment than condemnation, and may indeed be esteemed one of the most extraordinary incidents of the reign of George III.

In 1790 Pitt raised Lord Abercorn to the rank of a British Marquis. Those persons who justified or explained so many marks of Ministerial favour on ordinary principles of human action, observed that no honours or concessions in the power of the crown to bestow were above the pretensions of a man who not only descended from the royal line of Scottish kings, but was himself the head and representative of the Dukes of Hamilton in male succession. It is unquestionable that the Abercorn branch of the Hamiltons sprang, by the men, from James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, Regent of Scotland during the minority of the unfortunate Mary Stuart, while the ducal title has become vested in the family of Douglas, who descend by females from the same common stock. When, however, as a farther augmentation to so many dignities and distinctions conferred on this nobleman, the Garter was finally added by Pitt<sup>1</sup> some years later, there were not wanting individuals who sought for the solution of such extraordinary acts of predilection or friendship by recourse to more concealed causes.

They observed that Lord Abercorn's landed property was immense, while the First Minister laboured under pecuniary embarrassments, resulting not only from his slender patrimonial fortune, but increased

<sup>1</sup> The Garter was not given by Pitt. Lord Abercorn obtained it from the Addington Ministry.—ED.

by a want of private economy. Rendering ample justice to the native dignity and disinterestedness of Pitt's character, exemplified by so many shining proofs of those virtues as he had exhibited during his Administration, they nevertheless asked whether it was wholly incredible that a First Lord of the Treasury, whose wants were notoriously so pressing that he could neither pay the tax-gatherer nor the butcher when they came to his door, and whose ordinary resource for getting rid of his coachmaker's importunities was by ordering a new carriage, should permit a friend to furnish him with the means of meeting his difficulties by forcing on him a loan of some thousand pounds.<sup>1</sup> I am well aware of the indignation which the zealous adherents of Pitt will express at the bare supposition; but a belief in the Marquis's having assisted him with pecuniary aid was by no means confined to the enemies of the First Minister. Nor was Lord Abercorn the sole individual of my own time whose elevation has given rise to similar suspicions or opinions. Among the members of the House of Commons whom I found there on my first entering it in 1780, was Mr. Robert Smith, one of the two representatives for Nottingham. Being at the head of a banking-house situate on the other side of Temple Bar, he then resided in Lombard Street. His character was without reproach and his fortune ample, but he possessed no parliamentary talents. As he was again returned for the same town in 1784, and had early attached himself to Pitt, he was considered decidedly Ministerial on all questions. Towards the year 1790, Mr. Smith removed his residence to

<sup>1</sup> "Of all the peerages conferred in the last century, it would, we believe, be hard to name another the grounds for which are so clear and satisfactory in every view—above all, as to the impossibility of any pecuniary motive for the advancement of the *Earl* of Abercorn to the *Marquisate*."—*Quarterly Review*, vol. lvii. p. 455.—ED.

the vicinity of St. James's, where he occupied a splendid house looking into the Green Park. He still represented his native place, Nottingham; and adhering invariably to the Minister, was raised in 1796 to the Irish peerage by the title of Lord Carrington. Scarcely fifteen months afterwards Pitt placed him on the barons' bench in the British House of Peers by the same title; not, however, as was well known, without experiencing a long resistance on the part of the King.<sup>1</sup> Throughout his whole reign, George III. adopted as a fixed principle that no individual engaged in trade, however ample might be his nominal fortune, should be created a British peer. Nor do I believe that in the course of fifty years he infringed or violated this rule, except in the single instance before us. He was not so tenacious of the Irish peerage. In fact, on the same day when Mr. Smith had been raised to the latter dignity, another commercial member of the House of Commons, Sir Joshua Vanneck, was created a baron of Ireland by the title of Lord Huntingfield. Previous to the union with the sister kingdom in 1801, an Irish peerage, if conferred on an Englishman who possessed no landed property in that country, could be regarded as little more than an empty honour, producing indeed rank and consideration in society, but conferring no personal privilege, neither securing his person from arrest in Great Britain, nor even enabling the individual to frank a letter.

The dignity itself was frequently bestowed on very slight pretences. Sir Richard Philipps, a Welsh baronet of ancient descent, when member for the county of Pembroke in the year 1776, having pre-

<sup>1</sup> There is Pitt's own authority for the fact that he did not experience any difficulty on the part of the King. See "*Quarterly Review*," vol. lvii. p. 457.—ED.

ferred a request to his Majesty through the First Minister, Lord North, for permission to make a carriage road up to the front door of his house, which looked into St. James's Park, met with a refusal. The King, apprehensive that if he acceded to Sir Richard's desire, it would form a precedent for many similar applications, put a negative on it; but Lord North, in delivering the answer, softened it by adding, that if he wished to be created an Irish peer, no difficulty would be experienced. This honour being thus tendered him, he accepted it, and was made a baron of that kingdom by the title of Lord Milford. His intimate friend, and mine—the late Sir John Stepney—related this fact to me not long after it took place.

To return to Mr. Smith: I believe that he claimed a collateral alliance with the family of the same name, one of whom was ennobled by Charles I. under the title of Carrington, an English barony which expired under Queen Anne early in the last century. Whether the fact be so or not, I have been told that Pitt intended to raise his friend a step higher in the Red Book, and that when his Administration suddenly terminated in 1801, Lord Carrington was on the point of being created Viscount Wendover.<sup>1</sup> Several years earlier, on Pitt's becoming Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, he had conferred on Lord Carrington the government of Deal Castle, situate in the immediate vicinity of his own residence at Walmer. Such reiterated marks of more than common Ministerial friendship bestowed on a private member of Parliament, however respectable he might be, were by many imputed to a sentiment of grati-

<sup>1</sup> Lord Carrington denied the truth of this in a letter to the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, printed in the "*Quarterly Review*" (vol. lvii. p. 456). He also repudiated Wraxall's calumny, and stated that no money transactions ever passed between Pitt and himself.—ED.

tude in return for pecuniary assistance received from Mr. Smith, who, as a banker, might find many occasions of obliging the First Lord of the Treasury. I can neither assert nor deny the fact; but if we reflect how distressed Pitt was throughout his whole life, and how large a sum he owed at his decease, we shall not perhaps consider it as improbable that even his elevated mind might so far bend to circumstances as to permit his friends, from their abundant resources, to contribute to his temporary accommodation or extrication. It is much more difficult to justify the patent granted to Miss Cecil Hamilton, giving her the rank of an Earl's daughter, than it is to approve the British peerage conferred on Mr. Smith. I now resume the course of public affairs.

[*24th May 1784.*] Lord Surrey rising first in the debate that followed Mr. Hamilton's motion for an address of thanks to the King on his speech from the throne, in a tone and with a manner more subdued than he was accustomed to adopt during the last Parliament, or than was natural to him, deprecated a division. "If," he said, "the new Minister would only consent to omit the clause which thanked the sovereign for dissolving the late House of Commons, unanimity might be obtained at the opening of the session."

Lord North, while warning Pitt to beware of the mutability of Ministerial greatness, reminded him that in October 1780, when a new Parliament met, in which assembly he himself occupied the post now filled by Pitt, the Opposition of that day scarcely outnumbered the votes of the minority on the debate respecting the high bailiff of Westminster; "and yet," added he, "within eighteen months afterwards I was compelled to quit my high situation."

Fox, in more impassioned language, exhorted the First Lord of the Treasury not to add insult to

victory, and avowing the late rejected East India Bill as his own measure, entered briefly on its defence. Nor did he fail to charge the Minister with violating the promise made from the throne, when, in contradiction to that solemn assurance given by his own authority, he had dissolved the late Parliament. But Pitt, confident in the strength of his numbers, while he was sustained equally by the crown and by the country, remained as insensible to threats as to blandishments. Disdaining, he said, a hollow unanimity, he refused to omit a word of the proposed address. With ironical commendations on Fox's firmness in attempting to justify the East India Bill, he maintained that the nation had sat in judgment upon that measure and on its authors, whom they had pronounced guilty of rapacity and criminal ambition. Alluding to Fox's recent success in Covent Garden, he denied that it exhibited a test of public opinion, as it had been eminently produced by the interference of female charms, which superseded every other consideration, thus indirectly naming the Duchess his auxiliary. Pitt concluded by sarcastically congratulating the head of Opposition on the extent of his fame, which, spreading to the remotest corner of Great Britain, had procured his election for the Orkney and Shetland Islands.

To a harangue so personal Fox made no reply, and the division immediately taking place, Administration displayed a majority of 168 in a House where near 400 members were present; the respective numbers being 282 and 114.

As the first political division in the newly elected assembly, it must have been most grateful to the Minister, who beheld his power established on so firm a foundation; but it likewise exhibited to him a proof how differently the House felt respecting other points, where the British constitution or the

chartered rights of the subject were invaded. On the same evening, a few hours earlier, Pitt could only carry the previous question against Lee by ninety-seven votes, when a motion was made that "the high bailiff of Westminster ought to have returned two members for that city." It would have been honourable no less to the judgment than to the feelings of the Administration if they had conceded to this sentiment so strongly pronounced ; but party spirit is incapable of magnanimity, of moderation, or even of equity.

[25th May—7th June 1784.] Instead of bringing forward without delay all those legislative and financial measures which the critical state of the country and the advanced season of the year naturally demanded from a new Parliament ; instead of endeavouring as far as possible to redeem the time that had been sacrificed since the preceding month of November, during which period all the wheels of Government had stood nearly still in every department ; instead of allowing Fox to take his seat for Westminster, as sound policy, even without any mixture of liberality, would have dictated, leaving to Sir Cecil Wray the task of proving before a committee of the House, if he should be able, his own superiority of good and legal votes ; instead of this dignified and impartial line of proceeding, narrow and vindictive councils were adopted in the Cabinet. It was determined, at whatever risk or price, to prevent Fox from taking his seat for the city that had elected him, and to render every other public object subservient to his exclusion. All the little passions of human nature were called into action in order to oppress a formidable and illustrious individual. I am sensible that in passing this censure on Mr. Pitt's conduct towards his rival I condemn myself, since I sup-



ported and voted with him on every question relative to the Westminster election; but in writing these Memoirs I acknowledge no guide except truth, and I shall never hesitate to applaud or to condemn any transaction from personal considerations. Nor, indeed, does it follow that the acts which we contemplate with regret or with concern in 1817 must have excited those emotions in 1784, when they were viewed through the medium of political irritation.

Throughout the first fortnight which followed the address of thanks to the crown, all national business was postponed and swallowed up in the consideration of the Westminster election, or rather scrutiny. During the course of nearly fourteen years that I sat in Parliament, I never assisted at debates so tedious, so verbose, and so protracted—circumstances which will excite less surprise when we consider that legal interpretations, examinations at the bar, harangues of counsel, and technical illustrations or discussions relative to the intention of the statutes regulating elections, constituted the greater part of the entertainment. The House not unfrequently remained sitting till a very late hour of the night, sometimes till six on the ensuing morning, while the gentlemen of the long robe maintained the dispute with equal pertinacity. Fox demanded that a return should be made for Westminster; that he should be seated; and that the petition of Sir Cecil Wray might be tried by the regulations of the “Grenville Bill,” which would decide on the merits of the case.

The First Minister, it must be owned, on this occasion adopted the resentment of the Court, and became an active instrument of persecution. Perhaps I may feel it more sensibly, and express my disapprobation in warmer language, from having

myself been an object of royal and Ministerial enmity. It cannot, however, be denied by Pitt's greatest admirers, that the measures which he adopted in order to exclude Fox from taking his seat for Westminster are to be ranked among the least commendable, or even justifiable, acts of his long Administration.

Neither the Attorney-General nor the Solicitor-General took the prominent part in the debates upon this subject which, from their legal eminence and official situations, might naturally have been expected. Of the former law-officer I have already made some mention in the "*Memoirs of my Own Time*" already published. He unquestionably did not want either professional or parliamentary talents, though, had they been unaided by Pitt's determined partiality, they never would in all probability have raised him to the highest dignities of the long robe, nor still less have placed him in the House of Peers.

Yet moderate as were Pepper Arden's abilities when compared with the great luminaries of the bar in our time, they exceeded those of Macdonald,<sup>1</sup> the Solicitor-General, of whose jurisprudential knowledge or acquirements the "*Rolliad*" has thus sarcastically expressed its opinion—

"Learned as Macdonald in his country's laws."

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Archibald Macdonald, born in 1746; King's counsel and M.P. for Hindon in 1777; member for Newcastle-under-Lyne in 1780; Solicitor-General, 1784; Attorney-General, 1788; Lord Chief Baron of the Exchequer, 1793, which post he resigned in 1813. He died May 18, 1826. He supported Lord North while that nobleman remained Prime Minister, but he strenuously opposed the Coalition Ministry and attached himself to Pitt. He was highly esteemed in private life, and his legal acquirements were much higher than might be supposed from the text. He distinguished himself at the bar, and having naturally a judicial mind, he filled the judge's seat with great credit to himself, and great advantage to the cause of justice.—ED.

He possessed, however, other advantages. Sprung from one of the most ancient, opulent, and honourable Hebridean families, allied to some of the greatest nobility of England as well as of Scotland; his elder brother, the feudal representative of the Macdonalds of the Isle of Skye, had been created a baron of Ireland, only a few years earlier, by Lord North. Nor, while speaking of the two younger, ought I to omit some mention of the first of the three brothers, Sir James Macdonald, who died in the prime of youth at Rome early in the present reign. No man in my time excited higher expectations of his future eminence in all the attainments of elegant literature. No individual since Mr. Edward King, who perished at nearly the same period of life in 1637 (the "Lycidas" of Milton, swallowed up in the waves of the Irish Channel), was more bewailed by men of genius for his premature end. Perhaps, however, the marriage of Macdonald with the Lord President of the Council's eldest daughter, Lady Louisa Gower,<sup>1</sup> might contribute, more than all the circumstances above enumerated, to place him in so conspicuous an office as that of Solicitor-General under the new Administration.

To Kenyon, in an especial manner, was committed by Pitt the arduous task of defending the high bailiff of Westminster, justifying the scrutiny instituted by that returning officer, and preventing Fox from enjoying the solid fruits of his late hard-earned triumph. So invidious a commission could not have been delegated to a more able head or executed with more legal skill. Kenyon, on whom the employment of Master of the Rolls had been recently conferred, and who, propelled by Lord Thurlow's

<sup>1</sup> In 1777, Louisa, eldest daughter of Granville, second Earl Gower (afterwards Marquis of Stafford). This lady was blind for many years.—ED.

friendship, while he was sustained by his own great abilities, beheld in full prospect higher honours as soon as the Earl of Mansfield should quit the Court of King's Bench, which event his age and augmenting infirmities rendered apparently imminent, endeavoured to convince the House that Corbett had acted conformably to law in declining to make any return.

But no individual member took a more conspicuous share in the debates which arose upon this question than Lord Mulgrave. Speaking from the Treasury bench, moored in one of the best Ministerial anchorage grounds, at the Pay Office in Whitehall, the emoluments of which lucrative post he shared jointly with Mr. William Grenville, he looked forward to greater objects than prize-money or naval distinction in the line of his profession. Sustained by two younger brothers, both of whom possessed likewise seats in Parliament, and who were not less devotedly attached than himself to the Minister, he anticipated with confidence the British peerage as the sure reward of his exertions, which, if not brilliant or splendid, were at least systematic and unwearyed. But having, in the course of his various attempts to justify the high bailiff, asserted, somewhat rashly, that "base and shuffling tricks had been practised during the poll with a view to ensnare or entrap that officer," Fox, who felt the inevitable application of those expressions to himself, took up the subject in such a manner as effectually to prevent their repetition. I scarcely recollect having ever seen him more strongly agitated. With equal solemnity of voice and demeanour, addressing his discourse to Lord Mulgrave, he declared that "if the words just used were meant to apply personally to himself, before any evidence was heard to authenticate or prove them, the noble Lord held a language



CONSTANTINE PHIPPS

FIRST LORD MULGRAVE

*From an Original Picture in the Collection of*  
*Lord. Mulgrave*



which no man fit to be admitted into the company of gentlemen ought to use, and of which every man of honour would be ashamed."

The reproof produced an instant explanation, accompanied with assurances that not the most distant intention existed of connecting the accusation with himself. But the promptitude that Fox always exhibited in resenting and repelling every attack which touched his honour, when contrasted with the frank amenity of his manners and the recognised placability of his natural disposition, rendered him an object of respect even to his political enemies. Lord Mulgrave continued, indeed, to maintain throughout the subsequent discussions respecting the poll and the election that "tricks" had been used on the part of Fox's friends, omitting, however, the offensive epithets which had preceded the accusation on the former evening.

A more vociferous and entertaining, if not a more able advocate for the high bailiff, came forward in the person of Lord Mahon. This eccentric nobleman, who, as Earl Stanhope, has acted a conspicuous as well as a very useful part in the discussions of the House of Peers during a long period of time, and whose recent death may, in my opinion, be considered as a public misfortune, was brought up by his father principally at Geneva. He had there imbibed very strong republican, or rather levelling principles, ill adapted to a man whose high birth and prospects should naturally have inspired him with sentiments more favourable to monarchy. If he had flourished a century and a half earlier, under Charles I. instead of under George III., he would unquestionably have rivalled Ludlow or Algernon Sydney in their attachment to a commonwealth. His person was tall and thin, his countenance expressive of ardour and impetuosity,

as were all his movements. Over his whole figure, and even his dress, an air of puritanism reminded the beholder of the sectaries under Cromwell, rather than a young man of quality in an age of refinement and elegance. He possessed stentorian lungs and a powerful voice, always accompanied with violent gesticulation. The "Rolliad" describes him as—

"Mahon, outroaring torrents in their course."

So strongly did he always enforce his arguments by his gestures, as to become indeed sometimes a troublesome neighbour when greatly animated by his subject. He commonly spoke from the row behind the Treasury bench. In the course of one of his harangues, respecting a measure that he had himself suggested, the object of which was the suppression of smuggling, impelled by the warmth of his feelings, just as he was commending his friend and relation the First Minister for "his endeavours to knock smuggling on the head at one blow," he actually dealt Mr. Pitt who sat below him a smart stroke on the head. This manual application of his metaphor convulsed the House with laughter, and not a little surprised the Chancellor of the Exchequer; but it seemed neither to disconcert nor to arrest the impetuosity of Lord Mahon's eloquence. Since the ludicrous circumstance of Lord North's taking off Welbore Ellis's wig on the chafe of his scabbard, no scene more comic had been acted within the walls of the House of Commons. The same satirical production which I before cited, when alluding to Lord Mahon, says—

"This Quixote of the nation  
Beats his own windmills in gesticulation.  
To strike, not please, his utmost force he bends,  
And all his sense is at his fingers' ends."



Scarcely any individual took so active a part against Fox on the hustings during the progress of the poll as Lord Mahon had done, and few surpassed him in zeal for the Administration. To Pitt he was doubly allied, having first married his sister, Lady Hester, whose second daughter of the same name has been proclaimed Queen of Palmyra by some Arab tribes.<sup>1</sup> His second wife, one of the Minister's nearest relatives, was a daughter of Mr. Henry Grenville.

Nor did Fox want powerful supporters throughout the long discussions relative to his election, among whom Lord North and Sheridan appeared most conspicuous; but no member of Opposition attracted so much attention, or, more properly to speak, excited so much animadversion, as Erskine. Though not possessed of a seat in the new Parliament, yet being employed in the capacity of an advocate, he exerted every faculty of his powerful mind when pleading the cause of his friend at the bar of the House. During the examination of Grojan, the deputy-bailiff, who was likewise the legal adviser of Corbett, a curious incident arose, which for a short time interrupted the proceedings. I shall briefly state the particulars.

Grojan having asserted that Fox's agents were acquainted with the lists of bad votes polled for him, Erskine desired to be informed how or by what proofs it was pretended to ascertain that the persons in question were actually agents of Fox. The witness replying that "he so inferred because they appeared as his friends;" Erskine, with his characteristic promptitude and audacity, wholly

<sup>1</sup> The memoirs and travels of Lady Hester Lucy Stanhope, who died in Syria, 23d June 1839, were published in 1843 and 1846 respectively. She was the eldest of three daughters, and her sister, Lady Griselda, who married John Tekell of Hambleton, Hants, is said to have been as mad as she was herself.—*ED.*

regardless of any respect for the assembly before whom he spoke, observed that "if all Fox's friends were to be considered as his agents, almost every honest man throughout the country might be so esteemed, who was not a member of that House." An insinuation so injurious as well as insulting produced general indignation among the Ministerial ranks, and Sir James Johnstone rising in his place, demanded whether counsel was to be allowed thus to abuse and vilify the House, under pretence of examining a witness placed at their bar. Sir James, the elder brother of Sir William Pulteney and of Governor Johnstone, realised our ideas of those hardy Scots, the companions of Wallace or of Robert Bruce, cast as he was in a Herculean mould, of an uncouth aspect, rude address, and almost gigantic proportions. The counsel being ordered to withdraw, a short but acrimonious conversation ensued; Sir James, notwithstanding the efforts exerted from the Opposition side of the House with a view to compel him to desist from his charge, maintaining steadily that the individual who had offended should be called in and made to repeat his words. Great blame was attributed to the Speaker, who, instead of repressing such disorderly language, allowed it to pass unnoticed. Cornwall admitted that Erskine's conduct was improper and reprehensible, but excused himself for not interfering by his not having heard the particular expression that gave offence. It seemed uncertain whether the House would have allowed the matter to rest here if Pitt had not interposed to allay the warmth excited, observing with apparent suavity, though not unaccompanied by a degree of sarcasm, that "he imagined the counsel had no bad intention when he uttered the words, or perhaps it might form a part of his instructions to act in

the manner that had excited animadversion." The Ministerial interposition proved effectual in quelling the irritation of the assembly. Fox judiciously remained silent, and Erskine being again summoned to the bar, the examination proceeded without further comment.

As I may not find any more appropriate occasion than this event offers for speaking of a man who during the last forty years has so deservedly occupied so high a place in the public attention, and whom I have very particularly known at various periods of my life, I shall embrace it in order to present to the reader of these Memoirs an imperfect portrait of Erskine. He forms, I believe, the only instance in our history of an individual who, after having served in the army and the navy, both which services he quitted with discontent, has attained to the highest honours and emoluments of the bar, to a prodigious professional reputation, and finally to the peerage. Bishop Burnet, when speaking of Pemberton, who was made Chief-Justice of the King's Bench by Charles II. towards the end of his reign, adds—"His rise was so particular that it is worth the being remembered. In his youth he mixed with such lewd company that he quickly spent all he had, and ran so deep in debt that he was quickly cast into a jail, where he lay many years. But he followed his studies so close in the jail, that he became one of the ablest men of his profession." There is, however, a wide interval between Pemberton's and Erskine's elevation. A combination of moral and physical qualities, which rarely meet in the same person, and which were finally crowned by fortune in defiance of probability, favoured Erskine. Descended from the royal line of Scottish kings, he may nevertheless be accounted an Englishman, if an uninterrupted residence of

almost half a century in this country, and a total absence during that time from the soil that gave him birth, can constitute a denizen of England. Dining in company with Lord Erskine not long since at the Honourable Robert Greville's, he assured me that he had never visited Scotland since the year 1769. Inheriting scarcely any patrimonial fortune, disgusted alike with the naval and the military profession, having imprudently married while very young, and finding himself encumbered with a numerous augmenting family, every incitement which could propel to exertion operated on his mind. The bar, and the bar only, opened a field which, if followed up with success, would infallibly conduct to fortune, and probably to dignity. But how qualify himself at the age of twenty-five or six for such a career, at once dry, laborious, difficult, and uncertain? It required uncommon energies of character, severe application, and many renunciations, in order to acquire the jurisprudential knowledge necessary even for entering the lists. By steady and continued efforts, during the progress of which he sequestered himself for at least two years in a great degree from the dissipation of society, he surmounted those impediments and presented himself on the arena of the law. Keppel's trial, which took place in consequence of the transactions of the 27th July 1778 (a day not marked in our naval annals, like those of Camperdown, of Aboukir, or of Trafalgar, as a triumphant anniversary), fortunately presented to Erskine an opportunity for rendering himself advantageously known to the public. The expectations excited by his talents, together with the nature of his recognised political opinions, having procured him to be retained on the side of the accused Admiral, he displayed so happy a mixture of ability, eloquence, and spirit, as at once to estab-

lish his legal reputation. I have heard him relate some of the particulars of that pleading, not very long after they took place ; for no man was more easily induced to talk of himself and his own performances. Making, however, every allowance for the embellishments of self-love, or rather of inordinate vanity, he unquestionably impressed his hearers with the highest respect and admiration. A fearless temper, approaching sometimes to temerity, yet usually under the restraint of judgment, enabled him to break through the shackles previously imposed on courts of law. Erskine successfully undertook to spurn at precedents, to strike out a new path to eminence, to appal or silence the judges themselves, to intimidate, convince, or seduce the juries, to appeal from the understanding to the feelings, to invoke religion in aid of reason, to cite Scripture whenever it suited his purposes, to oppose the Bible against Blackstone ; finally, to lead captive his audience, and to carry the cause that he defended or espoused by extorting a sort of involuntary submission, sometimes yielded almost in defiance of evidence, facts, beliefs, or conviction.

Whatever exaggeration may appear in this description, those persons who are best acquainted with the trials on which Erskine has distinguished himself will not think the portrait overcharged. They will recollect the successful defence of Lord George Gordon, made by him in February 1781 ; that equally celebrated pleading for the Dean of St. Asaph, Shipley, in 1784 ; the harangues which saved Stockdale, and the publisher of Paine's "Age of Reason ;" finally, his efforts in favour of Horne Tooke, Hardy, and the revolutionists of the year 1794, together with so many other exertions of eloquence immortalised in the records of our criminal jurisprudence. Even the great luminaries of law,

when arrayed in their ermine and armed with all the official sanctity or majesty of their office, bent under his ascendancy, and seemed to be half subdued by his intelligence, or awed by his vehemence, pertinacity, and undaunted character. Buller, in whose office, before his promotion to the bench, Erskine had studied the rudiments of his profession—a man of distinguished ability, though caricatured in the printshops of the capital under the name of Judge Thumb, from an unfortunate declaration which he made relative to the powers of correction legally vested in the husband over the wife—Buller, who in 1784 was one of the puisne judges of the Court of King's Bench, but who long aspired, not without reason, to occupy the first place in that tribunal,<sup>1</sup> found himself overpowered on many occasions by Erskine. The Earl of Mansfield himself, the oracle of Themis, before whom every created thing under the roof of Westminster Hall became dumb or submissive, unable or reluctant to impose silence on one of his own countrymen, sprung like the Murrays from a noble stock, and shedding a lustre over the soil that alike gave them birth—even he often seemed to shrink from the contest, and gave way to the impetuous inflexibility of an individual who, though sometimes foiled, yet, like Antæus, derived strength from every fall. If Churchill very unjustly depicted Wedderburn as—

“Mute at the bar but in the senate loud,”

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Buller, who was appointed a justice of the court of King's Bench in 1778 at the early age of thirty, was one of the most distinguished judges. Both Lord Mansfield and Lord Thurlow had the highest opinion of his legal powers. For two years he filled the former judge's place when he was absent from his court, and it was Mansfield's anxious wish that Buller should succeed him as Lord Chief-Justice, but Pitt from political motives would not consent. Buller died June 5, 1800. The supposed declaration was—“In correcting her the stick should not be thicker than the thumb;” but in spite of a searching examination of his judgments by competent persons, there seems to be no evidence that he really expressed any such opinion.—ED.

the converse of the proposition, it was said, might apply to Erskine, as being "loud at the bar but in the senate mute." Not that, when a member of the House of Commons, he commonly sate silent on great questions, as I can attest; and still less did he absent himself, though he unquestionably did not display within the walls of that assembly the overwhelming influence which distinguished him when pleading before a court of law. His genius, irresistible while professionally exerted, appeared to be rebuked under the majestic eloquence of Pitt.

In his person Erskine combined great elegance of figure and manner. His movements were all rapid, appropriate to, and corresponding with, the texture of his mind. Intelligence flashed from his eyes, and his features, regular, prepossessing, as well as harmonious, bespoke him of no vulgar extraction. He was slender, finely proportioned, and of a just stature. The tones of his voice, though sharp, were full, destitute of any tinge of Scottish accent, and adequate to every professional purpose or exigency. Far inferior in legal knowledge, not only to Kenyon, but to Scott, Mitford, and many other practitioners at the bar, he overleaped the fences that he could not open or remove, brought forward auxiliaries unknown before to the coif, ransacked authorities never dreamed of by his brethren, quoted the *Pentateuch* or the *Proverbs*<sup>1</sup> more frequently than Coke upon Littleton, and bewildered or fascinated his hearers. From great defects and weaknesses he was not exempt. His vanity was obtrusive and insatiable. Narcissus was not more enamoured of his person than Erskine was of his talents, nor contemplated his own image with more complacency, even in the most troubled fountain. Portraits of

<sup>1</sup> Erskine declared that he could always frighten Lord Mansfield by quoting the Bible.—ED.

Erskine, as Counsellor Ego, were sold in the shops. His own speeches, actions, and importance, which seemed ever present to his mind, continually formed the theme of his discourse. How great, therefore, must have been his mortification when, on being presented to Bonaparte in 1802 at Paris, the Corsican First Consul, instead of recognising his extended fame, and beholding in him the future Chancellor of Great Britain, only said, "Etes vous légiste?" The truth of this anecdote rests with Fox's Irish biographer and panegyrist, Trotter, but I see no reason to doubt it.<sup>1</sup> Joseph Scaliger, when he was presented to Henry IV. of France, from whom he anticipated the most flattering reception, underwent a similar and a much coarser overthrow to his vanity and self-love. Erskine possessed, however, many elegant accomplishments, rarely found in the walls of the Temple or of Lincoln's Inn, and not usually united by the most expanded mind with the dry study of statutes and digests of law. He was a poet of no common order, and I have heard him repeat his own verses with nearly as much delight as he felt himself in reciting them.

Among the charming women who, in 1784, adorned the court of Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz (or, more properly to speak, the English capital, for scarcely could the Queen be said to have any court), might well be accounted Lady Payne, now Lady Lavington, her husband, Sir Ralph Payne, having been subsequently created an Irish baron. A native of Vienna, Mademoiselle de Kelbel—so she was named before her marriage—then resided with the Princess Joseph Poniatowska, widow of one of his late Polish Majesty's brothers, who had been many

<sup>1</sup> John Barnard Trotter, who published a book entitled "Memoirs of Mr. Fox's Later Years" in 1811, which met with a severe handling on its first publication.—ED.



years in the Austrian service, where he attained the rank of general. Her person and manners were full of grace. At Sir Ralph's house in Grafton Street the leaders of Opposition frequently met; and Erskine having one day dined there, found himself so indisposed as to be obliged to retire after dinner to another apartment. Lady Payne, who was incessant in her attentions to him, inquired, when he returned to the company, how he found himself. Erskine took out a bit of paper and wrote on it—

“’Tis true I am ill, but I cannot complain;  
For he never knew Pleasure who never knew Payne.”

Sir Ralph, with whom I was well acquainted, always appeared to be a good-natured, pleasing, well-bred man. His star rendered him, like Sir John Irwine, Sir William Gordon, Sir George Warren, and other Knights of the Bath of that period, a conspicuous as well as an ornamental member of the House of Commons, but he was reported not always to treat his wife with kindness. Sheridan calling on her one morning, found her in tears, which she placed, however, to the account of her monkey, who had expired only an hour or two before, and for whose loss she expressed deep regret. “Pray write me an epitaph for him,” added she; “his name was Ned.” Sheridan instantly penned these lines—

“Alas! poor Ned  
My monkey’s dead!  
I had rather by half  
It had been Sir Ralph.”

In his political attachments Erskine was ardent and impetuous, yet steady; devoted to Fox, whom he continued to follow through all the progress of the French Revolution. Nor was he less warmly attached to the Prince of Wales, whose Attorney-General he had been appointed immediately after

his Royal Highness set up his standard of opposition to the King on repairing to Carlton House. From that office his defence of Tom Paine occasioned his dismissal, but it was only to reappear subsequently in the more dignified character of Chancellor to the heir-apparent. Erskine's professional labours speedily expelled the demon of poverty from his dwelling, and no man seemed better to know the value of money, for he appeared to have constantly before his eyes Juvenal's

"Haud facile emergunt, quorum virtutibus obstat  
Res angusta domi."

He acquired, as he well deserved to do, a large fortune; but the modes to which he had recourse, and the Transatlantic securities in which he invested his money, with a view, as he conceived, to its preservation in case of a great national convulsion here at home,—precautions adopted by him during the revolutionary war,—neither did credit to his prudence nor honour to his patriotism.<sup>1</sup> Fortune, rather than his pre-eminent abilities, finally placed the great seal in his hand for a short time, and seated him in the upper House of Parliament. If Pitt had survived eight months longer, or if, reversing the events, Fox had died in January and Pitt in September of the same year, 1806, Erskine probably would have remained to the present day a commoner. But on the decease of the First Minister, the remaining members of the Cabinet, conscious of the awful crisis in which this country stood after the deplorable humiliation of Austria in the campaign of 1805 under Mack<sup>2</sup> agreed in

<sup>1</sup> He lost his large fortune by unfortunate speculations, and in his last years he lived upon the retiring allowance of a Lord Chancellor.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> General Mack was defeated by Marshal Ney in October 1805, when Ulm surrendered with 28,000 men, the flower of the Austrian army.—ED.

advising and exhorting the King to accept their resignation ; calling, of course, Fox, Lords Grenville and Grey, to his counsels. The Duke of Montrose, who was one of that Cabinet, assured me so himself very soon after the event took place. When, however, the list of individuals selected as proper for filling the office of Chancellor was delivered in to his Majesty by the new Ministers, at the head of which paper appeared Erskine's name, they were far from expecting, as one of the party declared to me, that the King would have acquiesced in the recommendation. George III. made no objection ; only observing to them, "Remember, he is *your* Chancellor, not *mine* ;" and Erskine received the great seal, to the astonishment of his own political friends. The defender of Paine and of Horne Tooke could not be other than obnoxious to the King, who, if his choice had been wholly unfettered, would probably have named Piggott to the high office in question.<sup>1</sup> Erskine might, in such case, never have sat upon the woolsack nor have attained to the peerage ; but his legal reputation would not have suffered by the exclusion ; for he proved that an advocate of paramount abilities might make a very inadequate Chancellor. His decrees will not be ranked with those of Yorke or of Scott, and scarcely with those of Bathurst.

It may perhaps be supposed or assumed that if Erskine had not attained to this dignity in 1806, he would have reached it six years later, in 1812, when the Regent, being liberated from the restrictions imposed on him by Parliament, could have followed his own inclination in the selection of Ministers. I admit that if the King had died in the autumn of 1810, or if the Prince of Wales had been instantly

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Pigott assisted Burke in drafting the Indian Bill. He was Attorney-General in 1806.—ED.

invested at that period with all the prerogatives of sovereignty, such an event might probably have taken place. But during the interval of about fifteen months which elapsed between his Majesty's last attack of mental alienation and his son's complete emancipation from all restraint, Lord Eldon had made a deep and favourable impression on the Regent's mind, as well as on his affections. That nobleman, who to great legal talents and a sound judgment joins qualities of a more companionable description, is by no means averse to the conviviality of the table. Like the elder Cato, of whom Horace asserts that he frequently warmed his virtue by the stimulus of wine, Lord Eldon willingly indulges, within proper limits, in that gratification. Of him it may be justly said (as the same poet does of Corvinus Messala, when alluding to the "amphora" in his "O nata mecum")—

"Non ille, quanquam Socraticis madet  
Sermonibus, *te* negliget horridus."

It can, therefore, excite no surprise if I state that Lord Erskine, though from long habits of intercourse he must have been more personally familiar with his Royal Highness than the present Chancellor, does not occupy a higher place in his confidence. I know indeed, from good authority, that during the summer of 1815, Lord Eldon, finding himself attacked by infirmities and diseases which, as he apprehended, would or might disqualify him for fulfilling the laborious duties of his office, addressed a letter to the Regent, requesting permission to resign his employment. In reply, the Prince besought him to lay aside any such intention, and added, among other flattering expressions, that "he was the only man in the Cabinet upon whom he (the Regent) could repose with confidence."

Lord Eldon complied with the royal wish ; and

some time afterwards, while dining with Lord Liverpool, having drunk at least a bottle of port wine, he pulled out the letter in question, and put it into the hands of the First Lord of the Treasury for his perusal. That Minister, not a little wounded as well as irritated at the exclusive moral preference manifested towards the Chancellor, hurried away next morning to Carlton House, and tendered his resignation. Surprised at so unexpected an event, his Royal Highness requested to be informed of the motives that gave rise to it. Lord Liverpool replied by stating the nature of the written communication which Lord Eldon had shown him under the Prince's hand ; adding, that "if confidence could no longer be reposed in him, it became him to retire from office."

The Regent experienced, however, very little difficulty in calming this ebullition of Ministerial resentment, and over another bottle he effected a pacification. In fact, the Chancellor and Lord Sidmouth are the only two members of the present Cabinet<sup>1</sup> whose convivial temper sympathised with that of the Prince.

Lord Erskine, verging, as he now is, rapidly towards his seventieth year, though in the full possession of all his mental no less than of his bodily faculties, yet appears very unlikely to hold the great seal a second time.<sup>2</sup> Decorated with the order of the Thistle, and long retired from the bar, he should rather be considered as a friend and a companion of the Regent than as any longer a candidate for the dignity of Chancellor. I regard his legal and his political race as in fact terminated, though he may long continue to speak and vote in the House of

<sup>1</sup> Lord Liverpool's Administration extended from 1812 to 1827.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Erskine appeared but little in public life after his retirement in 1807. He died, poor, in 1823, being then seventy-three years of age.—D.

Peers. The elevated and generous spirit of independence which he displayed throughout the whole parliamentary proceedings instituted against the unhappy queen of George IV. have covered Lord Erskine with immortal honour, and have stamped him in age, as he was in youth, the intrepid defender of oppressed or persecuted individuals. In order justly to appreciate his merit, we must recollect how ardent was his personal affection to the sovereign whose will he opposed. Only a paramount sense of moral duty, and a conscientious discharge of it, could have ever surmounted that strong attachment, cemented by so many years of service. To the Queen he was altogether unknown. If such conduct does not entitle to admiration and applause, I am at a loss to know what can ensure it. Posterity will remunerate him.

[8th June 1784]. One of the most interesting debates at which I was ever present took place when Welbore Ellis, with his characteristic formality, after a tedious speech, concluded by moving that "the high bailiff of Westminster be ordered forthwith to make return of two members." Ellis himself, who had long toiled ineffectually in the ranks of Opposition, was elevated to the British peerage about ten years later, when near fourscore years of age,<sup>1</sup> thus receiving, like so many others, that dignity from the hand of Pitt which he found it vain to hope he ever could attain from Fox. It is difficult to convey an adequate idea of the oration—for such it might properly be deemed, as much as any of those attributed to Demosthenes or to Tully—which the last-mentioned illustrious but persecuted member pronounced on this occasion.

<sup>1</sup> He was created Baron Mendip in the peerage of Great Britain in 1794, and died 2d February 1802, when his title devolved upon his grand-nephew, the first Viscount Clifden.—ED.

It comprised all that eloquence sustained by a just cause could combine to persuade and gain over his judges ; but however brilliant might be the matter, it wanted prudence in its conception and brevity in its delivery. After pointedly answering seriatim Lord Mulgrave, the Master of the Rolls,<sup>1</sup> and Lord Mahon, against each of whom he protested, not without reason, as prejudiced individuals unfit to vote upon such a question, he addressed himself personally to Pitt. In animated language he exhorted the new First Minister not to become an instrument of oppression in the hands of others, thereby forming a precedent which, while it disgraced the House of Commons, would infallibly open the eyes of all moderate men throughout the nation. Treating with derision the pretended scruples of Corbett, the high bailiff, as being inspired, not by conscience nor by justice, but as a low contrivance of his own Ministerial enemies with a view to prevent his being returned member for Westminster, he again demanded that the validity of his election should be referred to a committee appointed under the "Grenville Bill." With impassioned declamation he owned and lamented his own poverty, which imposing on his friends the necessity of defraying from their private purses the enormous expenses of an interminable scrutiny, wounded his feelings in the deepest manner. Never, he said, till the present occasion did he languish for affluence or deplore his incapacity to maintain with his own fortune his own right. Then with consummate imprudence, but in words of great energy, he directed his whole artillery against the secret advisers of the measure. Against the sovereign himself, whom, without violating the forms of the House, he designated in very intelligible terms, and whose sacred

<sup>1</sup> Lloyd Kenyon, afterwards Lord Kenyon.—ED.

name, he said, had been prostituted in the most shameless manner during the progress of the election, to the subversion of all decency or law, he levelled his severest observations. Nor did he allow Jenkinson to escape under the veil of silence, obscurity, and retirement beneath which he attempted or affected to shelter himself since Pitt's entrance on office.

Assuming as a fact that the new Minister was only the ostensible author of those measures which he did not direct and could not control—an accusation which it must be admitted was wholly destitute of proof, and, as I believe, of truth—Fox exclaimed, “I am far from attributing to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the guilt of being a voluntary instrument in this vile affair. He is not, I am well aware, a free agent. Not therefore to him, but to its true authors, do I impute the act; to that obstinate, dark, and short-sighted spirit which like a species of infatuation pervades, as it has uniformly guided and overshadowed, the councils of this unfortunate country throughout the whole progress of the present disgraceful and calamitous reign. I attribute it to that weak, that ruinous, and damnable system which has produced all our miseries, and all our misfortunes in every quarter of the globe; to those secret advisers of the crown whose rancour is only surpassed by their cruelty, and whose malignant nature impels them to pursue with insatiate revenge the object of their enmity.” When we maturely weigh the import of these expressions, and consider how deep a stain they affix on the person whom they describe, we cannot wonder that the individual who used them should have remained two-and-twenty years excluded from the councils of the sovereign whom he thus accused. Fox, by allowing his indignation to overpower his discretion,



in fact confirmed his rival in office, while he closed the doors of employment on himself. How could George III. voluntarily admit into his Cabinet a man who had so pointedly held him up to the condemnation of his own subjects? If Fox had changed the nature of his attack, and transferred his accusations exclusively to the Minister, opportunities might and would have arisen for facilitating his return to power. It is true that the first Earl of Chatham, while he still remained a commoner, had made use of similar language; but that great statesman spoke from higher ground than Fox, and with more effect after having triumphed in the eyes of all Europe over the united power of the House of Bourbon. Nor did even his example hold out any encouragement to such a denunciation of the King, since after his resignation in 1761, during the course of seventeen years that Lord Chatham survived, he was scarcely altogether a single year in office.

Jenkinson was present during the whole of this severe philippic, but he possessed too much command over his passions to notice Fox's insinuations. With consummate judgment, he had withdrawn himself as much as possible from the public eye, and waited in silence for his future reward. Far from taking as yet any ostensible part or place in the new Administration, he avoided at this time ever approaching the Treasury bench; mixed personally in none of the debates, but modestly seating himself at a distance on the Opposition side, towards the lower part of the House, he seemed studiously to shun observation. Presumptive heir as he was to the title and estate of Sir Banks Jenkinson, he had likewise unquestionably secured the promise of a British peerage, as soon as circumstances should enable the sovereign and his

Minister to bestow on him that dignity without exciting too much animadversion. Even his name was not to be found at this time in the Court Calendar connected with any English office. So supple, cautious, and patient was he, and by such unmarked steps did he advance as it were in the dark, feeling his way up to the House of Lords. Neither did Pitt in his reply condescend to notice or to refute the assertion made of his being himself only a puppet agitated by unseen wires, though he retorted on his adversary every accusation calculated to render him an object of national reprobation. With contemptuous irony he observed that Lord North and Fox had not during many years agreed on any political question, except in their decision upon the memorable Middlesex election, which seated Colonel Luttrell in the House, a decision now so generally condemned, and next in their condemnation of the "Grenville Bill," a bill now so universally applauded. Fox's early employment under Lord North's Administration, followed by his subsequent opposition to that Minister and terminating in their coalition, necessarily subjected him to comments on his parliamentary inconsistency or contradictions.

The motion of Welbore Ellis was negatived by seventy-eight, after a debate protracted to a late hour. Yet even in this triumph the Minister might find ground for mortification; and he must have involuntarily felt how languid or reluctant was the support extended to him on the present question, compared with the vast majority that carried the address to the crown at the opening of the session. The Opposition could only produce on that occasion 114 votes, while 117 divided for compelling the high bailiff to make a return to the precept. On the other hand, though 282 members voted

with Administration when they were called on to manifest their loyalty to the sovereign and their confidence in the Government, 195 could with difficulty be found to carry a question of personal oppression. So strong was the moral sense of right and wrong, even in an assembly convoked under the warmest impressions of partiality towards the Minister and of corresponding condemnation for the Coalition. Availing himself of his numerical superiority, conscious of the invidious nature of the question, and desirous, if possible, to terminate a contest which, as he well knew, violated the principles of justice, Pitt lost not a moment in moving that "the high bailiff do proceed in the scrutiny with all practicable dispatch." The motion was carried, and Corbett being called to the bar, received from the Speaker's mouth information of the decision of the House. Thus may be said to have finished the first act of a political farce in which, though Fox was overborne by numbers, the Minister could derive little gratification from his victory. Public opinion amply indemnified the vanquished representative for Westminster. During other periods of the present reign, when the tide ran with less impetuosity in favour of the sovereign and of Administration, so oppressive an exertion of power against an individual might even have produced consequences most injurious to the Government. But the unpopularity of the Coalition, aggravated by the general condemnation which the East India Bill had excited throughout the country, supplied every deficiency of substantial justice, and sustained the new Chancellor of the Exchequer in his elevation.

[9th—16th June 1784.] The Westminster election being now dismissed for some months, the real business of the session commenced ; but Burke

first rang the knell of the departed House of Commons, at which ceremony he performed the part of chief mourner. In a "Representation," as he denominated it, the reading of which at the table, however incredible it may seem, consumed more than three hours, he endeavoured to demonstrate that Ministers had calumniated Fox's late measure, while, impelled by motives of personal ambition, they had advised the dissolution of an assembly which they could neither persuade nor corrupt. Every assertion contained in Burke's motion constituting the severest satire both on the sovereign and on his Ministers, it received an immediate negative, without producing answer or debate of any kind; the mover's only object being to commemorate his opinions, and thus to transmit them to posterity, embodied in the journals of the House.

A discussion of a very different nature followed two days later, when Sawbridge revived the important subject, already twice agitated during the existence of the late Parliament, for amending the national representation. Its introduction placed the First Minister in a position of some delicacy, since he was now called on to prove the sincerity of his speeches and professions when out of office. Sawbridge refusing to postpone his motion, which was "for appointing a committee to inquire into the present state of the representation of the Commons," being literally the very proposition recommended by Pitt in 1782 from the Treasury bench; and all eyes being directed towards him, he was compelled to rise.

While in the progress of his speech he continued to profess the same ardour in the cause as he had always felt, he maintained, though without assigning any specific reasons for his opinion, that "it was

out of season at this juncture." He did not, however, fail to pledge himself, in words most solemn, to bring forward the subject as early as it might be possible in the ensuing session, protesting his sincerity in effecting the object of national reform. These assurances of future support, combined as they were with such a reluctance to agitate the question immediately, did not escape Fox's observation, who, though he affected not to distrust the Minister's declarations, demanded to be informed what causes constituted the particular inaptitude of the present moment. But no reply nor explanation being given from the Treasury bench, Sawbridge declared that, under such reserve, he should persist in his motion. He was a stern republican in his principles; almost hideous in his aspect, which always reminded me of Tiberius as drawn by Tacitus; of a coarse figure and still coarser manners; but possessing an ample fortune and a strong understanding. Nor did he want qualifications adapted to social life, being indisputably the greatest proficient at the game of whist that was then to be found among the clubs in St. James's Street. Since the decease of Beckford, so famous for his opposition to the crown in the beginning of the present reign, and of Crosby, who was committed to the Tower by the House of Commons, no individual in our time that had filled the post of Lord Mayor, if we except Wilkes, attained to greater popularity than Sawbridge previous to the existence of the Coalition.

A very interesting debate ensued, in which Sir Richard Hill took a conspicuous part. Representing, as he did, a great county (Shropshire), where he inherited a large estate, he was heard with respect whenever he addressed the House. Warmly attached to Pitt, he had imbibed very deep prejudices

against the Coalition; and in his sarcastic or satirical animadversions of Fox, it must be confessed that he frequently transgressed the limits of strict decorum, if he did not trespass on the regulations of debate. With holy writ he was very familiar, and as he pressed the Bible constantly into his service while speaking on political subjects—not always with the gravity that such a book seemed to demand—the “*Rolliad*” held him up conspicuously to ridicule as the “*Scriptural Killigrew*.”<sup>1</sup> Professing himself a friend to parliamentary reform, he nevertheless coincided with the First Minister in wishing to postpone the consideration of so important a question to a more propitious moment; and in the course of his speech, which he delivered from the Treasury bench, he declaimed with great asperity on the American war, as well as personally on Lord North, under whose Administration a contest so ill conducted and unfortunate took place. That nobleman, thus attacked, stood up, and after combating with arguments drawn from experience, history, and reason the specious plans of reform, to all which he professed himself a determined enemy, as substituting delusive theory in the place of great and acknowledged though imperfect benefit, he adverted to the hostilities with America. Far from deprecating the agitation of the subject, he demanded it; denied that he had caused the calamities so eloquently depicted, and called on his accusers to bring forward a charge against him. “I found,” said he, “the American war when I became Minister: I did not create it. On the contrary, it was

<sup>1</sup> “Brother of Rowland, or, if yet more dear  
Sounds thy new title, cousin of a peer;  
Scholar of various learning, good or evil,  
Alike what God inspired, or what the Devil,”

Sir Richard’s “promiscuous quotations from the Bible and Rochester” are also referred to.—ED.

the war of the country, of Parliament, and approved by the people. But if the gentlemen opposite think otherwise, let them come forward and accuse me. I shall not shrink. I am ready to meet and to repel their charge. Nay, I demand it as a matter of justice. There can exist no reason *now* for withholding it. I am wholly unprotected. The Minister of the day has a House of Commons to accuse me, a House of Peers to try me ; he is master of all the written evidence that exists against me. And as to parole testimony," continued he, fixing his eyes upon Dundas, "almost all those individuals who were *my* confidential friends, in whom I reposed my secrets, are now become *his* friends. Yet I court the inquiry ; but if, when thus called on, they do not grant it, I must insist that they do not henceforward argue upon the charge as if it were proved."

So manly and peremptory a challenge, while it imposed silence on his accusers—for not a word of reply proceeded from any member of Administration—produced expressions of admiration at the ability as well as the firmness which it displayed.

Pitt, though only three years earlier he had harangued with vehemence against the Ministerial conductors of that war, and had even invoked the divine vengeance on their heads, yet remained mute. He unquestionably felt that a parliamentary prosecution of the Minister who carried on that contest must involve in the culpability imputed the sovereign at the head of whose councils he now actually presided. In fact, George III. could no more have abandoned Lord North to the rage of his enemies than Charles I. ought to have consented to the execution of Lord Strafford. Both Ministers were equally the agents of the royal will, and both were alike entitled to protection from the prince whom they obeyed, if not constitutionally,

according to the principles laid down at the Revolution of 1688, yet in a moral and individual sense. On the other hand, Fox and Burke, who had now implicated themselves with the very Minister whose measures and policy had so long constituted the theme of their invectives, could not draw out in hostile array for his destruction. Such were the causes that extended a veil over the Administration of Lord North, and consigned it to a wise oblivion.

From this period the American war seemed to be nearly forgotten, and to have passed into the province of history, like the "War of the Succession" or the "War of Seven Years." Allusion was indeed occasionally made to it, but it no more constituted, as it had done during so many sessions, the perpetual weapon of declamation; while the nobleman who had conducted it, though he never again came forward in an official character, yet passed the remainder of his life in dignified repose, surrounded by admiring friends, in the bosom of his family. I have seen him often during that period in his own drawing-room in Grosvenor Square. There of evenings, with Gibbon by his side, who formed a frequent guest during his visits to England from Lausanne, Lord North, blind and infirm, displayed not only insuperable suavity of temper, but disclosed the stores of a classic mind, wit, and variety of the most interesting information. Pope, when speaking of Sir Robert Walpole after his retreat from public life, says—

"I shun his zenith, court his mild decline."

But the Earl of Orford, when no longer First Minister, by no means either possessed the same intellectual resources or exhibited the same domestic virtues as his successor in office under the present reign.



Sawbridge pertinaciously refusing to postpone or to withdraw his previous motion, Lord Mulgrave moved "the previous question ;" a manœuvre of which Sawbridge loudly complained, as an unfair expedient for getting rid of the proposition without giving it a decided negative. After a debate of considerable length, on coming to a division the numbers were only 125 for appointing a committee, while 199 supported Lord Mulgrave, thus rejecting the first proposed step towards reform by a majority of seventy-four votes. If ever the proposition could have met with success, it would have been adopted in 1782, when Pitt agitated it under the Rockingham Administration. Every circumstance then conspired to favour its introduction : Ministers deeply pledged to reform, who had already carried retrenchment into almost all the departments of the royal household or expenditure ; a House of Commons left without a leader, disbanded, and in which assembly numbers were inclined to support any measure that promised extrication from the state of distress into which the nation was plunged by the American war ; a country humiliated, drained, discontented, and calling for redress ; lastly, a sovereign fettered, disarmed, and incapable of opposing any effectual resistance to the measure. In fact, a majority of only twenty then negatived the motion ; so that eleven individuals by changing sides might have carried it, and opened wide the door to future changes in the constitution. It must likewise be remembered that in May 1782, Lord North, who had only been driven from employment a few weeks, took no active part in opposing the proposition. He was present indeed, and voted against it ; but as if stunned by the late political events, to the surprise of his friends he did not open his lips. Nor ought we to forget that at the moment when Pitt

addressed the House, we had reached the lowest point of national depression, to which we sunk just previous to the intelligence of Rodney's great naval victory over De Grasse. When a similar experiment was reiterated in the ensuing session by the same person, its result was widely different. The House had already recovered from its apathy, and shaken off its deference or submission to reformers, however plausible their systems might appear in theory, when decorated with the charms of eloquence. Lord North amply compensated for his silence in 1782 by his active exertions and powerful opposition in 1783. On the first of those occasions the attendance scarcely exceeded 300, while on the second nearly 450 members voted. Yet no more than 149 persons were found to support the motion, among whom the names of Thomas Pitt and of Henry Dundas, however respectable they might be individually, served only to excite ridicule. So soon had the cry for parliamentary reform subsided, and such was the operation of time on the minds of men in preventing them from the hasty adoption of projects for ameliorating the national representation.

[*30th June 1784.*] The month of June already drew to its close before the new Minister brought forward his measures of finance to meet the exigencies of the year, or, in parliamentary language, "opened the Budget." He performed this arduous task in a manner at once so voluminous, accurate, and masterly, as to excite universal admiration, a sentiment which received no small augmentation if we reflect that he had then only just completed his twenty-fifth year. Pitt may, indeed, be regarded as a political phenomenon not likely to recur in the lapse of many ages, unless we should incline to consider Lord Henry Petty (now Marquis of Lans-

downe), who in 1806, as Chancellor of the Exchequer,<sup>1</sup> executed the same Ministerial function, to form any sort of parallel. Pitt's youth furnished Opposition for a long time with a fertile theme of ridicule and comment. The "Rolliad," describing him in 1784, exclaims—

"Above the rest, majestically great,  
Behold the infant Atlas of the state,  
The matchless miracle of modern days,<sup>1</sup>  
In whom Britannia to the world displays  
A sight to make surrounding nations stare—  
A kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care!"

Early in July this "schoolboy" introduced his East India Bill, and nearly the whole month was consumed in the discussions or alterations to which it gave rise. The measure unquestionably could not be charged with the same imputations of personal ambition, rapacity, and confiscation which Fox's bill had occasioned, the consent of the Directors to its introduction, and afterwards of the proprietors being obtained; the political power antecedently vested in both which bodies of men, though diminished and restricted, was by no means annihilated. Indeed, from its first introduction down to the time of its finally passing the House of Commons, concession and conciliation appeared to animate the Minister, who modulated, expunged, or altered numerous clauses and regulations. Some of these substitutions were suggested by his own friends or supporters, but the far greater part emanated from the ranks of Opposition. Important as the subject was in itself, and still more important as it must prove in its operation or consequences, it neither excited the interest nor produced the attendance which had distinguished the former East India Bill. The advanced season of the year and the

<sup>1</sup> In Lord Grenville's "All the Talents" Ministry.—ED.

overwhelming majorities which Administration commanded on every division greatly diminished the exertions of mutual hostility. Fox, it is true, while he justified his own bill, attacked the Minister's proposition with the strongest weapons of reason and argument. Sheridan transfixed it with the keenest shafts of ridicule, and Burke thundered against it with no less indignation than Demosthenes inveighed against Philip. On the other hand, Jenkinson, emerging from the sort of obscurity in which he had attempted or affected to remain ever since the commencement of the session, now came forward for the first time, and from the Ministerial side of the House extended his active support, or, as the Opposition denominated it, his sanction to the measure.

[*2d—28th July 1784.*] "I am charged," said Fox, "with erecting a fourth estate in the Legislature by my bill for the government of India; but did it, in fact, erect any estate that was not previously in existence? The Court of Directors was the fourth estate, and my bill only altered the nature of that estate from one without efficacy, delusive, and destitute of control, to a power constantly under check and removable by address from either House of Parliament. I admit that I took the commerce as well as the government of India, for doing which I was traduced throughout the country; but what is the measure of the present Minister? The new India Board that he proposes to erect may send instructions to India in commercial as well as in political matters, where they think the revenue to be concerned. Oh! but, says he, the Company may appeal. Appeal! To whom and from whom? Is such a pretended appeal anything except a fallacy and a farce? Will the Company appeal from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and one of the Secretaries of State to the King in Council? And will

not the King take the opinions of those Ministers? Or does the bill mean to insinuate that the Company may appeal from the ostensible Cabinet to the secret junto who constitute the real Government of the country?"

Sheridan exposed the measure to derision, as being not only drawn up in the most slovenly manner, but deficient in all the qualities that could entitle it to public attention or respect. Pitt, in order to manifest his candour, and the readiness with which he adopted every suggestion that might render the bill more salutary or palatable, having admitted twenty-one new clauses, which were severally distinguished by the letters of the alphabet, Sheridan seized on the circumstance as affording ample matter for contemptuous comment. He entreated of some member to propose three more clauses, which, he said, were requisite in order to complete the Ministerial *horn-book*. "The Chancellor of the Exchequer acts indeed wisely," added he, "in admitting that there exist good reasons for the alterations. If he looks round him, he will find reasons strong enough to make him desirous of conciliating those persons who, after having overturned one Administration, are powerful enough to make *him* feel that he is a mere creature of their own formation, whom, as they have set up, so they may pull down at pleasure." The application of these insinuations, as well as of Fox's allusions, to the pretended influence of Jenkinson behind the throne, was too obvious to be mistaken by any person. Pitt did not, however, condescend to answer, or even to notice, such aspersions.

In language more indignant, Burke made the roof resound with his declamations against every part of the bill, which measure he consigned to the abhorrence of Europe and of Asia, as only

framed for purposes of malversation, tyranny, and oppression. He reprobated the contumelious treatment which the reports of the select committee, where he himself most actively assisted as a member, had recently undergone from the Lord Chancellor; that nobleman not having hesitated in his place as a peer to denominate them "compositions entitled to no more credit than the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe." On the Governor-General of Bengal Burke poured out all the vials of his wrath, declaring that he was ready instantly to go into the proof of the numerous crimes laid to Hastings' charge in the reports presented to the House. In the name of the plundered natives of Hindostan, whose grievances, he said, were intolerable, he entered his protest against Pitt's bill. Against the tribunal or court of judicature which the Minister proposed to erect for the trial of East Indian delinquents he inveighed in terms of scorn and execration. Apostrophising the common jail of London, "O Newgate!" he exclaimed, "forgive me if I have dishonoured your inhabitants by comparing a highway robber with the criminals who have laid waste India and compelled millions to feel the horrors of famine! The murderer and the housebreaker are harmless when opposed to those who have left whole provinces without a habitation, and have exterminated the natives throughout the fairest portions of the globe!" These accusations, which remind us of the orations pronounced by Cicero against Clodius and Verres, were repelled by Dundas and disregarded by the House; which assembly, while it paid the tribute of just admiration to Burke's eloquence, appeared to consider him as under the delusion of party violence, deeply-rooted prejudices, and disappointed ambition. Scarcely indeed could he obtain a hearing from an audience whose patience,

it must be confessed, he frequently put to severe trials. A majority of 211 voted with the Minister for going into the committee upon the new bill—the respective numbers being 271 and 60. So low in numerical strength had Fox fallen, and so completely had the Coalition lost their influence over the House of Commons.

[*July 1784.*] The debates that took place respecting the system of government proper to be adopted for those extensive as well as opulent provinces subjected to the East India Company, and embracing so rich a portion of Asia, brought forward to public notice various members of the House who had hitherto remained in comparative obscurity. At their head may be placed Mr. Richard Atkinson, a man who, though now forgotten, then occupied a conspicuous place. He was partner in a commercial firm, principally known on the Exchange of London by the name of Muir, whose connections and transactions lay chiefly in Jamaica. Atkinson possessed a long arithmetical head, sustained by vast facility and rapidity in calculations of a pecuniary nature, qualities held in high estimation by Pitt. Under Lord North's Administration, particularly towards its close, Atkinson deeply engaged in those annual loans which, though not always negotiated, as the enemies of the Minister asserted, on terms advantageous to the country, were supposed generally to produce no small emolument to the contractors. By these acquisitions he had been enabled to make considerable purchases of land in Jamaica; and his ambition expanding with his circumstances, after first effecting his election as a Director of the East India Company, he was chosen early in 1784 an Alderman of the City of London. Being a determined enemy of the Coalition and an ardent supporter of the new Ministry, he presented himself

as a candidate for the honour of representing the metropolis on the dissolution of Parliament. Sawbridge, who had during so many years enjoyed great popularity east of Temple Bar, being, in consequence of his attachment to Fox, no longer equally acceptable to his fellow-citizens, incurred on this occasion the utmost risk of losing his seat as member for London. In fact, Atkinson ran him so hard that Sawbridge only carried his election by seven votes: the respective numbers at the close of the poll being 3823 and 3816. Nor would Sawbridge have even triumphed by this small majority if the contest could have been continued for two hours longer, the poll-books being scarcely shut when three postchaises, each containing three voters, who had been brought up from distant parts of England by Atkinson, arrived at the hustings.

In consequence of this severe disappointment, he was obliged to procure for himself another seat; and it might be esteemed singularly, or rather ridiculously unfortunate that he should have been chosen for the borough of New Romney. Some years earlier, the commercial house of Muir and Atkinson having contracted to supply rum for the army serving in America, a great mortality had ensued among the British troops occasioned by the quality of the article furnished, which was new, and therefore very pernicious in its effects on the health of the soldiery. To Atkinson's quality of a rum contractor the "*Rolliad*" alludes when describing Pitt's powers of eloquence in debate. The author says—

"Nor rum contractors think his speech too long,  
While words like treacle trickle from his tongue."

No individual was indeed marked out for more pointed attack by the writers of that satirical com-



position than Atkinson, whose name they ingeniously contrived to connect with Jenkinson on all occasions. It is thus that they stigmatise the young First Minister as being—

“Of either Kinson, At or Jen, the fool.”

And again, in another part of the “*Rolliad*” they exclaim—

“All hail ! ye virtuous patriots without blot,  
The minor Kinson, and the major Scott !”

But lest these lines should not be sufficiently clear in their application, the work subjoins, “The minor Kinson, or Kinson the Less, is obviously Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Jenkinson being confessedly greater than Mr. Atkinson, or any other man except one in the kingdom.” In debate Atkinson was able and intelligent, never speaking except upon subjects of commerce, taxation, or finance ; always with brevity, and never venturing to deviate into tracks with which he was unacquainted. Indeed, his formation of mind and education did not qualify him to call to his aid any factitious ornaments or classic images. Towards the concluding years of his life he became attached to a lady of beauty and of rank, Lady Anne Lindsay, then an unmarried daughter of the Earl of Balcarras, whose hand it was supposed he aspired to obtain. By his will he bequeathed her a considerable part of his property, his own career being cut short in May 1785, when a feverish and consumptive complaint carried him off in the vigour of his age. If he had survived, he might not improbably have attained to considerable distinction, and even to employment under Pitt’s Administration, of which he had approved himself not only a strenuous but a very useful adherent.

The second individual whom the discussions respecting India rendered conspicuous at this time

was Major Scott. He had been selected by Mr. Hastings from among the military servants of the Company in Bengal and sent over to England as his avowed agent, a character which he sustained with unabated zeal, indefatigable exertion, and no contemptible talents. It was nevertheless regretted, as I know, by the Governor-General's most intelligent and judicious friends, that almost from the hour of his arrival in London Scott began to weary, and finally to disgust the public with pamphlets that followed each other in endless succession. To this circumstance the "*Rolliad*" points when Merlin, inspecting the water-closets at the House of Commons, among the inventory of furniture that he there finds and enumerates, adds—

"With reams on reams of tracts, that, without pain,  
Incessant spring from Scott's prolific brain."

The invariable object of these ephemeral productions was to justify Hastings from the imputations thrown out against him by his enemies, to eulogise his administration, and to prepare the country for his expected return from Calcutta. Like Atkinson, Scott never brought to the agitation of subjects submitted to the House any foreign or irrelevant matter; but he was far more unguarded in his assertions, more frequently on his feet, and more prolix in his speeches, which he always delivered with uncommon fluency, free from any degree of embarrassment. Unfortunately for Hastings, the prudence and caution of his parliamentary representative did not equal the purity of his intentions. Relying on the meritorious public services rendered by the Governor-General to his employers and to the crown, services meriting rather, as it might have been imagined, national approbation and royal protection or favour than prosecution, Scott, im-

perfectly acquainted with the secret Ministerial springs, reckoned too confidently on the permanent friendship of Administration. While he always spoke from behind the Treasury bench, and supported Pitt on almost every question, he expected reciprocal assistance from that quarter, forgetting that scarcely two years had elapsed since Dundas, in his capacity of chairman of the "secret committee," asserted in his place that Mr. Hastings never visited the frontiers of Bengal without having in his contemplation the imprisonment of a prince or the extermination of a people."

When Fox, therefore, during the debates which arose upon the new East India Bill, declaimed in animated terms against the Governor-General as a state criminal of the first magnitude, Scott, not satisfied with denying the alleged facts or defending them on principles of policy and necessity arising out of Hastings' position, called on Fox to bring forward without delay a specific charge. In like manner, only a few days later, when Burke having made a motion for the production of papers relative to the treatment of one of the native princes, Almas Ali Cawn, by Hastings, depicted the latter as "a scourge of God, who had reduced the beautiful provinces of Bengal to a waste and howling desert, where no human creature could exist," Scott seconded the motion, and entreated of the House to suffer it to pass, in order that Hastings' innocence might be clearly demonstrated to the world. It is true that Pitt, by opposing some of Burke's subsequent motions respecting the Governor-General's conduct towards the Princesses of Oude, which motions were thrown out without a division, seemed to extend his protection to Hastings. In effect, the Minister's refusal to comply with Burke's demand of papers not only stopped all further attempts to criminate or

impeach the Governor-General at that time, but produced a most intemperate and inflammatory harangue directed by Burke against Administration. Abandoning himself to the violence of his emotions, he denounced them to posterity as "the ministers of vengeance to a guilty, a degenerate, and a thoughtless nation." He threatened them with retribution from an offended Deity, as accomplices in the guilt of covering India with blood, while the inhabitants of that unhappy country were insulted, plundered, and oppressed. Above all, he expressed his indignation at the assertion made by Scott that the reports of the select committee were partial, garbled, and libellous compositions. "I swear," exclaimed Burke (in the classic language of the elder Brutus, which he seemed to parody), "by those very reports here lying on your table, in the formation of which I personally bore so large a share, that the wrongs done to humanity in the Eastern world shall be avenged on those who have inflicted them. The wrath of Heaven will, sooner or later, fall upon a nation that suffers its rulers thus to oppress the innocent and the defenceless." Neither Pitt nor Dundas made any reply to these invectives. The storm which menaced Hastings was arrested and suspended, but by no means wholly averted. Under circumstances more favourable to his accusers, after his return from Bengal, they renewed the attack; and the same Ministers who in 1784 manifested a disposition to shelter him from impeachment, coinciding at a subsequent period with his enemies, sent the man who had principally saved India to take his trial at the bar of the House of Peers.

Precisely at the same time when Scott appeared in the House as the advocate of Hastings, a much more formidable, inveterate, and able adversary of the Governor-General arose among the front ranks

of the Opposition. I mean Francis, whom we have since beheld invested by his Majesty, on Fox's recommendation, when far advanced towards the close of life, with a red riband.

After having passed several years in Bengal as a constituent member of the Supreme Council, engaged in perpetual and violent altercations with Hastings, which terminated in a duel,<sup>1</sup> where Francis was wounded, he returned to England some years before the Governor-General, like the evil genius of Brutus, which met him again at Philippi. Nature had conferred on Francis talents such as are rarely dispensed to any individual—a vast range of ideas, a retentive memory, a classic mind, considerable command of language, energy of thought and expression, matured by age and actuated by an inextinguishable animosity to Hastings. Francis, indeed, uniformly disclaimed any personal enmity to the man, only reprobating the measures of the ruler of India; and perhaps he might sincerely believe his assertion. But he always appeared to me, like the son of Livia, to deposit his resentments deep in his own breast, from which he drew them forth, if not augmented by time, at least in all their original vigour and freshness. Acrimony distinguished and characterised him in everything. Even his person, tall, thin, and scantily covered with flesh; his countenance, the lines of which were acute, intelligent, and full of meaning; the tones of his voice, sharp yet distinct and sonorous; his very gestures, impatient and irregular, eloquently bespoke the formation of his intellect. I believe I never saw him smile; but when I make this assertion I ought in candour to add, that though I was well acquainted with Atkinson and Scott, I never had any personal knowledge of Francis beyond acquaintance

<sup>1</sup> The duel was fought in 1780, when Francis was shot through the body. See "Annual Register," 1818, p. 205.—ED.

contracted in the House of Commons. Nor did I ever dine in company with him except once, when we met at the Prince of Wales's table at the Pavilion at Brighton in the autumn of the year 1802, where Francis appeared to me to be thoroughly domesticated. Bursting with bile, which tinged and pervaded all his speeches in Parliament, yet his irascibility never overcame his reason, nor compelled his friends, like those of Burke, to mingle regret with their admiration, and to condemn or to pity the individual whom they applauded as an orator. Francis, however inferior he was to Burke in all the flowers of diction, in exuberance of ideas borrowed from antiquity, and by the magic of eloquence, more than once electrified the House by passages of pathos or of interest which arrested every hearer.

A beautiful as well as an affecting specimen of his ability in this line occurred during the progress of the debates on Pitt's India Bill. One of the regulations in that Act abolished the trial by jury relative to delinquents returning from India, and instituted a new tribunal for inquiring into their misdemeanours. Against such an innovation on the British constitution Francis entered his protest in terms of equal elegance and force. "I am not," exclaimed he, "an old man, yet I remember the time when such an attempt would have thrown the whole country into a flame. Had the experiment been made when that illustrious statesman, the Earl of Chatham, enjoyed a seat in this assembly, he would have sprung from his bed of sickness, he would have solicited some friendly hand to lay him on the floor, and from thence, with a monarch's voice, he would have called the whole kingdom to arms in order to oppose it. But he is dead, and has left nothing in this world that resembles him. He is dead, and the sense, the honour, the character, and

the understanding of the nation are dead with him."

Perhaps in the whole range of Fox's, of Burke's, or of Sheridan's speeches, there does not occur a sentiment clothed in more simple yet striking language, or which knocks harder at the breast than this short epitaph, if it may be so denominated, pronounced over the grave of the Earl of Chatham. The repetition of the words "He is dead!" were attended with the finest effect; and the reflections produced by it involuntarily attracted every eye towards the Treasury bench, where sat his son. I have rarely witnessed a moment when the passions were touched in a more masterly manner within the walls of the House than by Francis on the above occasion. The impression made by it on Pitt is asserted to have been of the deepest kind.

While I am engaged on the subject of Sir Philip Francis, I feel myself impelled to resume a question which I have already agitated elsewhere at considerable length; I mean, who was the author of the Letters of Junius? At the time when I attempted to discuss that mysterious and interesting inquiry, my opinion, after examining the various pretensions set up, inclined to William Gerard Hamilton. But in leaning towards that supposition, as being then apparently sustained on the best authority, I expressly added, that "it by no means amounted to demonstration or approached to certainty." And I further stated my reasons for thinking that Junius might be still alive, though of course very far advanced in his career.<sup>1</sup> Since the year 1815 several new publications have appeared throwing light upon the topic; in particular, two which merit attention, both of them recently

<sup>1</sup> See ante, vol. i. pp. 334-347.

given to the world. One written by Mr. George Chalmers, who has long held an efficient employment under Government, entitled "The Author of Junius Ascertained," attributes those letters to Hugh Macaulay Boyd, a name which was long ago mentioned among the candidates. The other publication, of an anonymous description, and denominated "The Identity of Junius with a Distinguished Living Character Established," confers it on Sir Philip Francis. These two productions are now lying before me. The first is dictatorial and dogmatical, rather demanding submission to the opinions laid down than calmly enforcing conviction by arguments and facts. Nor does Mr. Chalmers seem to be exempt from the oblivious inadvertence of old age in some parts of the discussion, as must be too apparent to every attentive reader. That Boyd was a man of very considerable talents, subsisting by their exertion during many years, composing with elegance and facility, alike able and disposed to imitate the style of Junius, whose fame he emulated, these facts are incontestable. But all the proofs of his having actually written the celebrated letters issued under that signature seem to repose on no solid foundation. With the true spirit of a placeman, Chalmers considers Junius as a seditious writer deserving universal reprobation. He even carries his prejudices, or rather his enmities, so far as to depreciate those inimitable compositions, which he describes as deficient in grammatical accuracy, full of false English; finally, the productions of an inexperienced youth.

Junius will not, however, be considered by posterity as an advocate of rebellion, or even of sedition. True, he is not a courtier; but there is neither democracy nor Jacobinism in his writings. Far from inculcating such principles, he is, on the con-



trary, loyal; not, indeed, to the mere office of a king, however abused or ill-advised or despotic, but to the constitutional office of a British prince, the sovereign of a free people. And when did he write? Let us be just to Junius as well as to George III. Time will equalise them in a certain degree and pass sentence on both, though not perhaps before the twentieth century. We stand at present too much under the shadow of the House of Brunswick to allow our reason or our pens fair play. Junius wrote principally between 1769 and 1772, during the Administrations of the Duke of Grafton and of Lord North. Will any man dispute or deny that, as a nation, we were then comparatively fallen in the eyes of Europe? Will any man contend that the Government was vigorously, or ably, or successfully administered during that period of his Majesty's reign? Did we resemble the country that, under the first Mr. Pitt ten years earlier, between 1759 and 1762, humbled both the branches of the House of Bourbon? No! We were sunk in the estimation of the Continental powers and involved at home in domestic feuds; while the King, long before Junius attacked him, had lost all his transitory popularity. Nay, more; notwithstanding the acknowledged rectitude of his intentions, he had then forfeited much of the veneration of his subjects. He subsequently recovered it after the peace of 1783 and the appearance of the Prince of Wales. "Junius's Letters" contain a true but highly coloured picture of the time in which they were written, exaggerated upon certain points or facts. That inaccuracies of composition, and even errors of concord or of grammar, are to be found in those letters will be admitted; but to defend them as the productions of a superior and a masterly pen, to defend them from the attacks

of Chalmers, would be like rescuing Pope from the criticisms of Lintot and of Curl.

After endeavouring to prove his assertion relative to Boyd by stating as evidence the belief or the suspicions of several persons who were impressed with the same sentiment as himself, Chalmers triumphantly concludes by adducing "the confession of the culprit" to Monsieur Bonnacarrere—a confession made by Boyd while at Calcutta in the year 1785, under Sir John Macpherson's roof, who was then Governor-General of Bengal. I well knew the individual here mentioned, Bonnacarrere, in London and at Paris, previous as well as subsequent to the French Revolution. He was a man of ingratiating manners, whose imposing figure, animated conversation, and personal accomplishments secured him a favourable reception in society. The Viscount de Souillac, governor of the island of Mauritius, sent him in 1785 to Calcutta as a spy, an office for which Bonaparte again selected him in 1802, when he was dispatched to England, and remained during a few weeks in Leicester Square, where, in company with Sir John Macpherson, I visited him. His qualities always appeared to me more adapted to secret political intrigue than to open, honourable negotiation. Under the old administration of France he had vainly attempted, after his return from India, to obtain employment. Sir John Macpherson, conversing at Lausanne in the year 1791 with the Maréchal de Castries, who had occupied a high place in the councils of Louis XVI., expressed to the Marshal his surprise at finding that the French Government had not availed themselves of the talents and information of Bonnacarrere. "*C'est que nous l'avons pris pour un claquedent,*" answered Castries. I believe that term, if translated into English, is nearly synonymous with our

chatterbox. I do not, however, mean to imply the slightest doubt of Boyd's having asserted to Bonnacarrere that he wrote the letters of Junius. Indeed, it appears from Chalmers' publication that Boyd laboured so much under the weight and magnitude of his own pretended secret, or was so anxious to enjoy the fame attendant on its disclosure, as to insinuate to English gentlemen at Madras, though he never asserted to them in express terms, the fact of his having been the author of the letters in question. But the mere assertion of any man that he composed them can carry no conviction, unless sustained by authentic documents, or at least by internal moral proofs drawn from a life of unquestionable rectitude, and a character for strict veracity. Chalmers himself depicts Boyd as a venal writer, lending his pen to maintain almost any cause for which he was remunerated ; idle and dissipated, though labouring under continual pecuniary embarrassments, which accompanied him to the close of life, and deficient in high moral principle.

Are we, then, to regard his assertion, made to a foreigner and a spy under injunctions of secrecy, as furnishing any proof of the fact? And can we suppose that a man so anxious to attain the fame of being Junius as to hazard divulging the secret during his life would not, if he had written those letters, have taken measures at least to secure to himself the reputation annexed to them after his decease? Yet, though he survived nearly nine years his communication made to Bonnacarrere, no posthumous document whatever has appeared in support of his claim down to the present day. But, as far as the conviction of contemporaries on the point can weigh in deciding our opinion, Chalmers himself has furnished us two, both which militate completely against Boyd. The first is, "a

very eminent member of the Irish bar, Sir William Duncan," who, in a letter of which Chalmers gives an extract, while he does justice to Boyd's various talents, whom he personally knew from early life, yet expresses his disbelief of Boyd's having possessed "the knowledge of the political drama and of the *dramatis personæ* there exhibited," namely, in "Junius's Letters." We have, however, much higher and more unimpeachable authority—Lord Macartney, under whose protection, and in whose immediate service, Boyd, in 1781, went out to Madras.

That nobleman, though of a harsh, severe, and unaccommodating temper, possessed an enlarged understanding, great knowledge of men, and a very sound judgment. "Having been shut up," says he, "in a small packet with Mr. Boyd during a four months' passage to India, without once letting go an anchor, I had frequent opportunities of sounding his depth, and of studying and knowing him well, though I was not before personally acquainted with him. I do not say that he was incapable of writing to the full as well as Junius, but I say I do not by any means believe that he was the author of 'Junius.' Mr. Boyd had many splendid passages of 'Junius' by heart, as also of Mr. Burke's parliamentary speeches; and was also a great admirer of Sterne, whose manner he affected in his private letters. Mr. Chalmers' argument would be stronger if any performance of Mr. Boyd previous to the appearance of 'Junius' could be found which indicated that 'Junius' might be expected from such a writer." After so weighty a refutation of Chalmers' hypothesis as is contained in the short criticism above cited (which Lord Macartney wrote on a spare leaf of Chalmers' first work, where he attempted to prove Boyd the author of "Junius"), we are only astonished

at its reiteration by the same person. Instead, however, of yielding to Lord Macartney's reasons, Chalmers endeavours to prove that his Lordship and all mankind have been totally mistaken in imagining the letters of Junius to be classic productions or fine compositions. Relative to the memorable "Letter to the King of the 19th December 1769," he denominates it "balderdash;" concluding with a compliment to George III. at Junius' expense, for presuming to write such trash to "a personage who perfectly knew the properties of his native tongue."

Widely different is the impression made on my mind by the other publication, identifying Junius with Sir Philip Francis. Here every page combining to a common point, ultimately forces conviction. Chalmers, reasoning on peculiarities of idiom or of expression found in "Junius's Letters," infers, probably with reason, that the author was a native of Ireland. But Boyd's pretensions gain nothing by this admission, Francis and he having equally been born at Dublin. If, however, Boyd was Junius, he must have composed his first letter, dated January 21, 1769, before he had attained his twenty-third year, having come into the world on the 16th of April 1746; and he must have finished the whole series before he attained to twenty-six. Such powers of mind, independent of the information necessary for the work, would approach to a prodigy. On the other hand, if we assume the letters in question to have been the work of Sir Philip Francis, our admiration is qualified by knowing that he had passed his twenty-eighth year when the first letter in the series was published, and had more than accomplished his thirty-first at their conclusion. But a difficulty, if possible, still more insurmountable, on the supposition that Boyd was Junius, is to discover

by what means he could have attained the variety of official, military, legal, and other knowledge displayed throughout those letters. Whoever will peruse them with that object in his contemplation must necessarily perceive that only a person instructed in such details, and accurately informed upon them, could have put the questions to Sir William Draper which Junius asks relative to the sale of his regiment, his half-pay, and his pension. Still less could he have written the letter of the "17th October 1769," enumerating the circumstances of General Gansel's rescue. Boyd possessed no obvious facilities of obtaining such information; while Francis, who occupied a considerable post in the War Office during the whole period between 1769 and 1772, had access to every kind of official knowledge. He was, indeed, compelled to resign his situation early in the last of those two years, precisely at the very point of time when Junius ceased to write. Yet these circumstances, strong as they must be esteemed, form only the foundation on which rests the supposition. The superstructure is found in the unvaried and striking coincidence, not only of general sentiment, but of language and expression, between the letters of Junius and the speeches of Francis during more than twenty years that he sat in the House of Commons. It appears impossible that such a perfect similitude could exist without identity. If, however, any further proof were wanting, it seems to be furnished by the written answer which Sir Philip Francis made to the inquiry whether he was Junius,—an answer given in the publication to which I allude. It is precisely the reply which a man would make who, approaching the end of life, wished to anticipate the fame of Junius, and to reclaim it indirectly for himself, without at the same time incurring either the obloquy or the danger

annexed to such an admission. I consider it as conclusive, because Sir Philip Francis would, I conceive, never have allowed a doubt to exist of his being the author of "Junius's Letters" while he was conscious of never having written them. Boyd, on the contrary, it is evident, wished to be thought Junius, though he never ventured to assert it to any of his own countrymen. Lastly, if we once ascertain that Junius is still alive, the solution of that mystery, which during near half a century has overhung the writer of those celebrated letters, seems to be developed. Under this impression, I cannot help inferring that whenever Francis is withdrawn from among us we shall probably arrive at the certainty of his having been Junius.\*

The financial and legislative discussions which arose in the House of Commons upon the measures proposed by the First Minister during the month of July, though not of the magnitude or importance of the East India Bill, yet offered matter of interesting attention. Among the abuses that then loudly demanded correction was the privilege of franking letters ; and Pitt judiciously selected it for an object of taxation. As neither the date of the letter nor the place from which it was sent was then necessary to be inserted in order to render it free of postage when directed by a member of either House of Parliament, the number of franks exacted, and the improper use made of those vehicles of intelligence or correspondence, required Ministerial interposition. Not only were covers transmitted by hundreds,

\* Sir Philip has been called away by death since the foregoing paragraph was written, and yet hitherto no positive information has been communicated to the world respecting the point under discussion. I do not, however, on that account, retract any opinion that I have hazarded on the subject.—22d June 1820.—WRAXALL.

Francis died in 1818 ; he was then in his seventy-eighth year. To the last he denied the authorship of "Junius's Letters," but in such a manner that it might be supposed he really was the author.—ED.

packed in boxes, from one part of the kingdom to another, and laid up as a magazine for future expenditure; far greater perversions of the original principle, for purposes very injurious to the revenue, took place. I was acquainted with a member of the House of Commons, a native of Scotland, decorated with the order of the Bath, who sent up to London from Edinburgh by one post thirty-three covers, addressed to an eminent banking-house in the Strand, many or most of which contained, not letters, but garden-seeds. So scandalous a violation of the right claimed and exercised under the privilege of Parliament induced the Postmasters-General of that time to order the covers, instead of being delivered according to the address, to be instantly carried up to the Speaker's chair as a fit subject for public notice and animadversion. Timely application having, however, been made to Lord North, then First Minister, by the friends of the gentleman who had so acted, and who was a steady supporter of Government, the business never came before the House or acquired publicity. In 1784 it was thought sufficient to enact that the place, day, month, and year, where and when the frank was dated should be henceforward written on the cover: but subsequent regulations have still further reduced the privilege by diminishing to one-half the weight antecedently allowed, namely, to one ounce instead of two, and by restricting the number which can be issued or received free of postage on the same day, thus very properly contracting to narrow limits the facility of sending letters many hundred miles, without paying for their transport, in this commercial and corresponding country. It still constitutes, nevertheless, a distinction to the members of the Legislature, though now diminished to the shadow of its pristine usage; for I am old enough to remem-



ber the time when only the name of the member, with the word *free* written on the outside of a letter, constituted a frank. I have indeed heard that they were then sold by the waiters of coffee-houses, and exposed for sale in the windows. Such abuses, which were dishonouring to the two legislative assemblies, have happily produced, though slowly, their own remedy.

Wit always mingled in every debate or discussion where Sheridan took part, even on topics not commonly susceptible of being made the vehicle of ridicule and amusement. Pitt, among the minor objects which he selected for taxation, having proposed that one guinea should be paid for every horse entered to start for any match, Lord Surrey, who possessed much racing knowledge, advised him to alter his tax, and to substitute in its place five pounds on the winning horse of any plate of fifty pounds value. The Minister, without abandoning his original proposition, instantly adopted, with many acknowledgments, the Earl's suggestion; and having amended his first motion, annexed to it the other, which of course met with no resistance. He did not omit at the same time to confess his own ignorance on subjects connected with the turf, and his obligation to the noble person who had so kindly as well as ably assisted him. Sheridan, who sat close by Lord Surrey, then rising, after having paid some compliments to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his dexterity and jockeyship in thus leaving his noble friend behind him, observed that whenever Lord Surrey should next visit Newmarket or Ascot Heath, his sporting companions, who would be sweated by this new tax of his fabrication, instead of commending his ingenuity, would probably exclaim—

“Jockey of Norfolk, be not so bold!”

A more felicitous application of the words, supposed to have been affixed over the tent of the first Duke of Norfolk on the night preceding the battle of Bosworth, could not have been imagined. It convulsed the House, and even Pitt, whose features did not always relax on hearing Sheridan's jests, however brilliant or apposite they might be, joined in the laugh excited at Lord Surrey's expense, observing at the same time that "he believed it was the first instance of a committee of ways and means occupied in the painful duty of proposing taxes having been terminated in so lively a manner."

Not that Sheridan by any means exclusively monopolised the wit on the Opposition benches. Besides Lord North, whose name can never be mentioned without recollecting the sallies of genuine humour with which he always illuminated and often enlightened subjects of parliamentary discussion, there were other individuals to be found in that part of the House who contributed their share. Among them I must not omit Courtenay. He was nobly allied on his mother's side, Lady Jane Stuart, she being a sister of John, Earl of Bute, who acted so conspicuous, though not (as far as his Ministerial fame is concerned) enviable or glorious a part in the councils of the crown at an early period of the present reign. I know not whether Courtenay, who was by birth an Irishman, actually descended in the paternal line from the Latin Emperors of Constantinople of that name; but no man seemed to me more likely than himself to say with the satirist of Domitian's reign, in his contempt of ancestry—

*"Stemmata quid faciunt? Quid prodest, Pontice, longo  
Sanguine censeri?"*

He was in truth of the school of Diogenes, though at an early period of his life he had served during a

considerable time in the army. I never remember a more complete cynic in his dress, manners, and general deportment, all which bespoke that inattention to external appearances or forms characteristic of the philosopher of Sinope. But under this neglected exterior lay concealed a classic mind, an understanding highly cultivated, a vast variety of information, and a vigorous intellect. His wit, though commonly derived from Roman or Athenian sources, savoured more of Aristophanes than of Menander, of Petronius Arbiter or of Juvenal than of Horace. It was always coarse, generally caustic and satirical, not unfrequently indecorous or offensive to a great degree. He possessed considerable powers of oratory unrepressed by timidity, and borrowing assistance from irony on every subject, even the most serious. Lord Townshend, to whom he was strongly attached, brought him into Parliament for Tamworth. When that nobleman held the post of Master-General of the Ordnance under Lord North's Administration, and afterwards under the Coalition Ministry, Courtenay occupied the employment at first of Secretary and lastly of Surveyor of the Ordnance. Like Diogenes he was poor, but of a high and independent character, that seemed to despise wealth. Rose, one of the two Secretaries of the Treasury, who generally took an active part on all revenue questions or financial subjects, as it was natural that he should do, not coming forward immediately to Pitt's aid one evening, when the House was engaged relative to the interest allowed by Government on navy bills, Courtenay apostrophised him under the flower that bears his name, asking him—

“*Quid lates dudum, Rosa?*  
*Delicatura effer e terris caput,*  
*O tepentis filia cœli!*”

Rose, who was little versed in the lore of anti-quity, made no reply to this invocation, which he probably did not thoroughly understand, but Courtenay did not always deal his sarcasms round him with equal success or impunity.

I remember, not many days after the circumstance which I have just related, during a debate that took place upon commuting the duties on tea and setting limits to smuggling, Brook Watson expressed himself strongly in favour of the measure proposed by Administration. He was a man of quaint, formal manners, but of an acute understanding and of recognised probity. After acting as commissary to the British forces in America, on his return to this country at the termination of the war, he had been chosen an Alderman of London, and afterwards one of the representatives for the capital, coming in by a great majority at the head of the four candidates on the recent election. Watson having asserted in the course of his speech that "his constituents highly approved of the bill, as they were professed enemies to contraband practices and to smuggling," Courtenay observed in answer that "he was happy to know from such high authority the change which had taken place among the citizens of London on so important a point; for," added he, "they lay under very invidious imputations, scarcely a century having elapsed since a comic writer" (I believe Vanbrugh), "who, in one of his dramatic pieces has introduced on the stage a City Alderman, thought proper to call him by a name characteristic of his profession, namely, Alderman Smuggler. I therefore congratulate the worthy magistrate on the conversion operated among his constituents." Courtenay continuing to speak for a considerable time, Watson had leisure to recover from the first shock of this sarcasm, and when the former had finished, the Alderman, starting up,

entreated the patience of the House for a single moment. "The honourable gentleman," observed he, "has been severe upon me, and has alluded to a character introduced upon the theatre under the name of Alderman Smuggler; but I hope he will be pleased to remember that another of our dramatic writers" (Beaumont and Fletcher) "has exhibited on the stage a Copper Captain." So appropriate a repartee, coming by retort from a quarter where the House did not look for wit, produced a proportionate effect, and turned the laugh against Courtenay.

Having mentioned incidentally Mr. Rose,<sup>1</sup> I shall say a few words relative to him and to his colleague, Mr. Steele, who were Joint Secretaries of the Treasury during so long a series of years under Pitt's Administration. Both are still living at this time in March 1817. Both are Privy Councillors. Yet hardly do Hogarth's "good and bad apprentice" present a stronger contrast towards the evening of their lives than is now offered by Rose and Steele. The first not only continues to be still a member of the House of Commons, holding a great as well as a lucrative employment, Treasurer of the Navy, and extending the same support at present to Lord Liverpool which more than thirty years ago he gave to Pitt; Rose has likewise accumulated in his own person some of the most beneficial offices in the gift of Parliament or belonging to the Exchequer. He has, besides, got complete possession of a Hampshire burgh, during the accomplishment of which solid object of ambition he contrived to make both knights

<sup>1</sup> The Right Hon. Sir George Henry Rose, G.C.H., Clerk of the Parliaments 1805. He was one of the Paymasters-General of the Army. In 1814 he went as Envoy Extraordinary to Munich, and subsequently to Berlin. He edited the "Marchmont Papers" in 1831. Sir George died 18th June 1855, and his eldest son was created Lord Strathnairn in 1866.—ED.

and baronets, such was his commanding interest with Pitt. After procuring for his eldest son the hand of an heiress, young as well as agreeable in her person, Rose has placed him among the foreign Ministers at one of the most important courts of Germany.<sup>1</sup> Nor has he forgotten to place his second son advantageously here at home among the officers of the House of Peers.<sup>2</sup> On the New Forest, of which tract he is himself a verderer, Rose has acquired a very enviable and extensive landed property, thus realising almost every component part of a high and permanent fortune except one, I mean the British peerage. Not that he was oblivious of that distinction, which would have set the seal to all his former acquisitions. On the contrary, his son having married in the year 1796 a lady (Miss Duncomb<sup>3</sup>) in whose family there had once been an earldom (Feversham), common fame asserted that he aspired to elevate his grandsons, if not his son, to a seat in the House of Lords, by procuring for his daughter-in-law or reviving in her person the title of Baroness Feversham. We cannot indeed feel any surprise at such an expectation or attempt

<sup>1</sup> George Rose, born at Brechin, 17th January 1744; Keeper of the Records at Westminster in 1772; Secretary to the Board of Taxes in 1776; Secretary to the Treasury in 1782-83, and again in December 1783; M.P. for Launceston in 1784; vacated his seat in 1788 on being made Clerk of Parliaments, but was returned for Lymington, and in 1790 for Christchurch. In 1801, on the resignation of Pitt, he vacated the Secretaryship to the Treasury; but in 1804, when Pitt was again in office, he was appointed Joint Paymaster-General of the Forces and Vice-President of the Board of Trade till January 1806, when Pitt died. In 1807 he was appointed Treasurer of the Navy and Vice-President of the Board of Trade under the Duke of Portland. He continued to hold the post of Treasurer of the Navy until his death on the 13th January 1818, in the seventy-fourth year of his age. His Diaries and Correspondence were edited by the Rev. Leveson Vernon Harcourt, and published in two volumes octavo in 1860.—ED.

<sup>2</sup> William Stewart Rose, Reading Clerk of the Committees of the House of Lords.—ED.

<sup>3</sup> Frances, daughter of T. Duncombe of Duncombe Park, co. York.—ED.

on his part when we reflect that in the same year, 1796, the Earldom of Liverpool was created, and in the following year originated the British peerage of Carrington.<sup>1</sup> Down to the present time, however, Rose and his descendants still remain commoners, though almost oppressed under the load of offices, reversions, and places which, in the course of a long, laborious, and meritorious public life, he has acquired for himself or for his family.

Rose was understood to be a natural son of the late Earl of Marchmont,<sup>2</sup> celebrated by Pope as Lord Polwarth, and who, like Lord Mansfield, survived the principal men of genius that shed a lustre over the two dull reigns of George I. and II. Lord Marchmont, by his will, bequeathed to Rose his superb library. Lord Thurlow, I believe, originally recommended him to Pitt. He continued unalterably attached to that Minister, and he possessed many qualities highly deserving of Pitt's confidence. Indefatigable, methodical, and yet rapid ; equal to, but not above, the business of the Treasury, he earned his reward by long and severe exertion. The Opposition reproached him with duplicity ; and the " Probationary Odes," parodying the favourite air of " The Rose," assert that

" No rogue that goes  
Is like that Rose,  
Or scatters such deceit ! "

But I knew him well in his official capacity during at least twelve years, and I never found him deficient in honour or sincerity. I owe him this justice. It must likewise be recollected how difficult a task he had to perform in keeping at bay, yet not irritating or

<sup>1</sup> In the person of Robert Smith, son of Abel Smith, the eminent banker of Nottingham.—D.

<sup>2</sup> His biographers state him to have been the son of a Scottish non-juring divine.—ED.

alienating, the crowd of Ministerial claimants in both Houses of Parliament. During more than fifteen years he formed the mound on which those waves principally broke and spent their force. Nor did he possess the ample means of appeasing or conciliating suitors which Robinson enjoyed under Lord North's Administration. Burke's bill had greatly contracted the patronage of Government; and though, during the course of Pitt's Administration, between 1784 and 1801, the power of the crown augmented, not only in the army and navy, but throughout India, as a natural consequence of our new territorial conquests or acquisitions, yet the number of places in the disposal of the Treasury here at home almost annually diminished by suppressions. Rose's countenance bore the deep impression of care diffused over every feature. All the labours and conflicts of his office might be traced in its lineaments. Not so Steele. His face, which was cast in another mould, rather reminded of a Bacchus or a Silenus, from its jollity, rotundity, and good-humour, than it impressed with ideas of ability or forethought. He was placed about Pitt by the powerful interest of the Duke of Richmond; his father being Recorder of Chichester, which city Steele represented in several successive Parliaments. His faculties, though good, were moderate, and would never of themselves have conducted him to any eminence in public life; but he rose through the gradations of office in a series of years, till he became one of the Joint Paymasters of the Forces. On Pitt's resignation in 1801, I believe he continued in place under Addington; but not having satisfactorily accounted for about £19,000 of public money, he was called on to explain the deficiency, as Lord Holland had formerly been to a much larger amount, while holding the same employment. The sum, however, being replaced,



Steele, whose social temper and qualities had procured him many friends, remained on the list of privy councillors ; but he has retired into the political shade, and no more stands prominent on the canvas, like his ancient colleague, Rose, who, at seventy, erect in mind and in body, possessing all his intellect, active as well as able, still takes his seat on the Treasury bench, and may possibly close his laborious career by attaining to higher honours or dignities than he has yet acquired.

END OF VOL. III.

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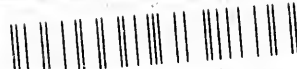


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